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JULY 1986 A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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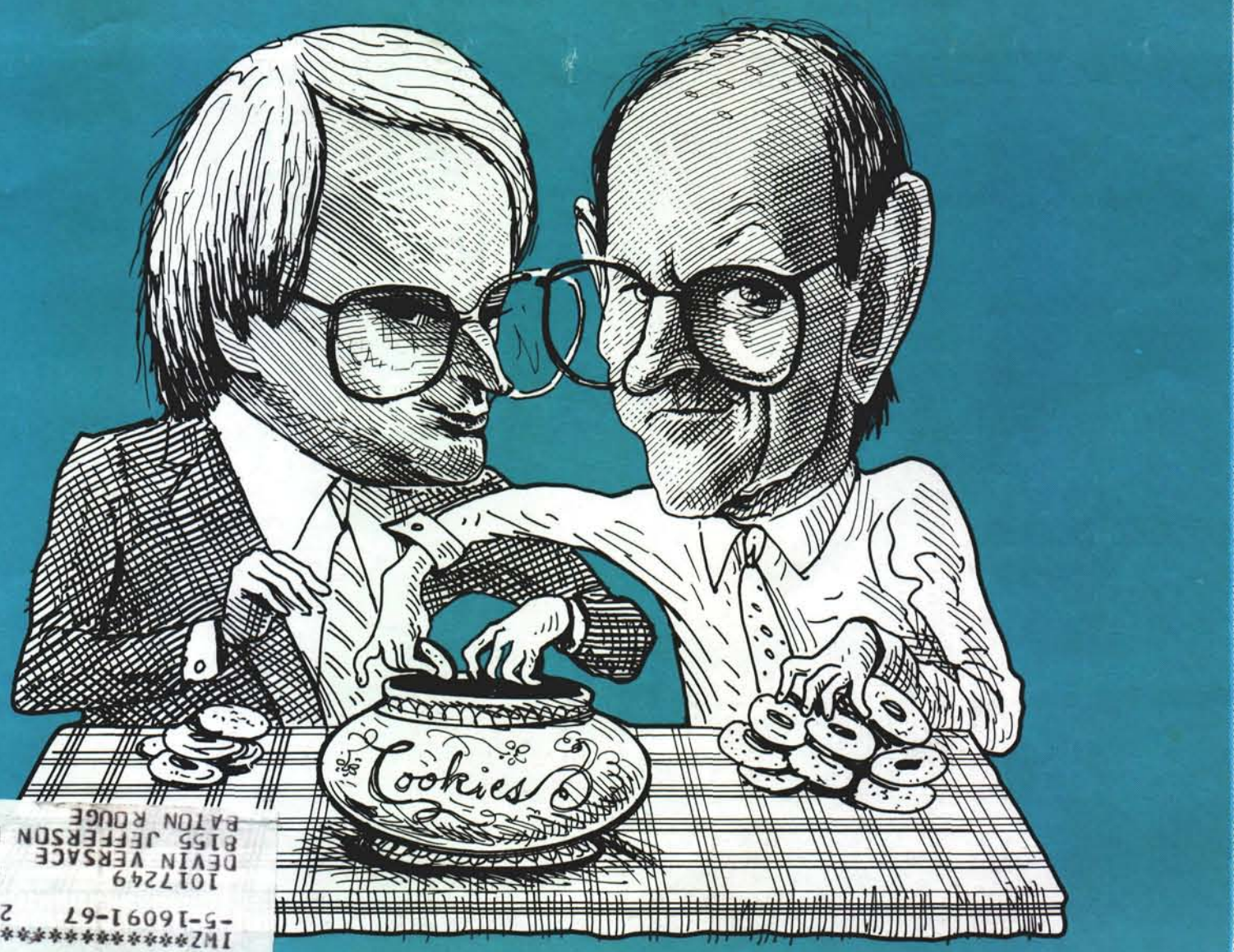
The Bad Boys of Washington



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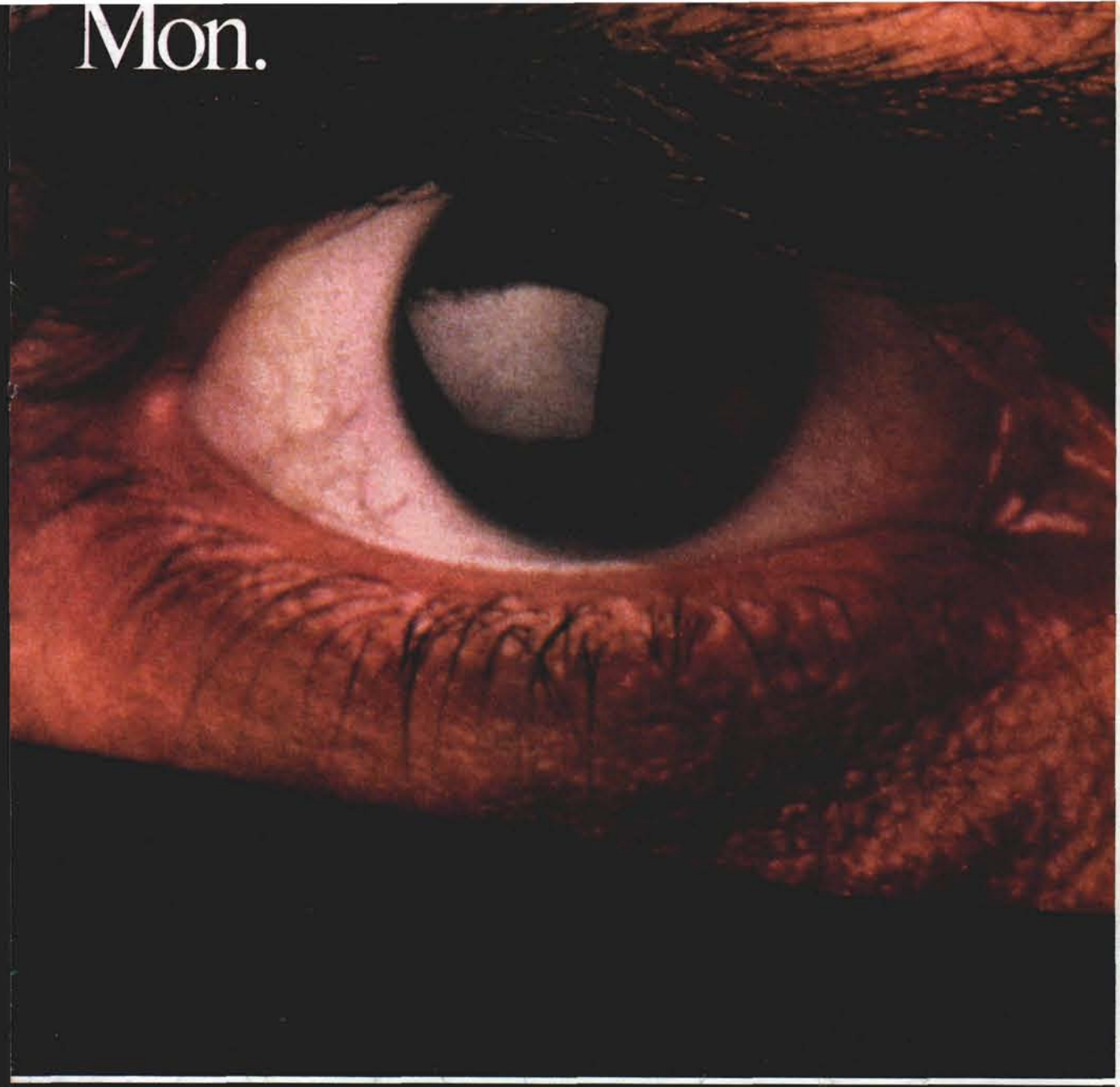

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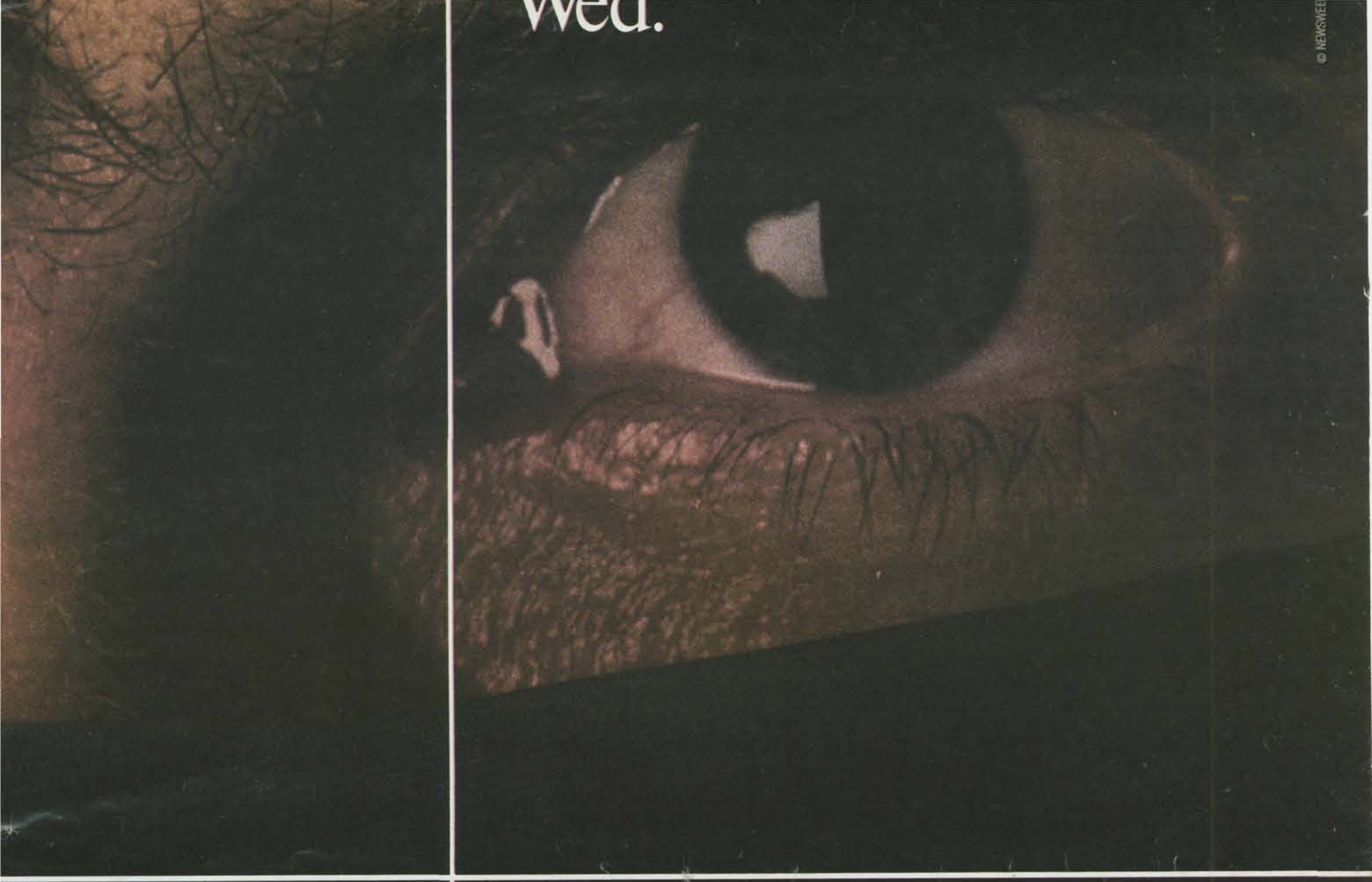

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approach to the news—reporting not only what's happening, but what can be done about what's happening.

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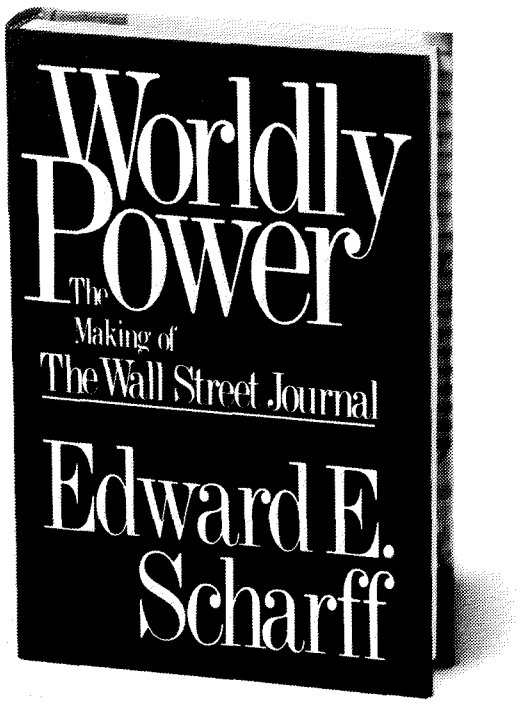

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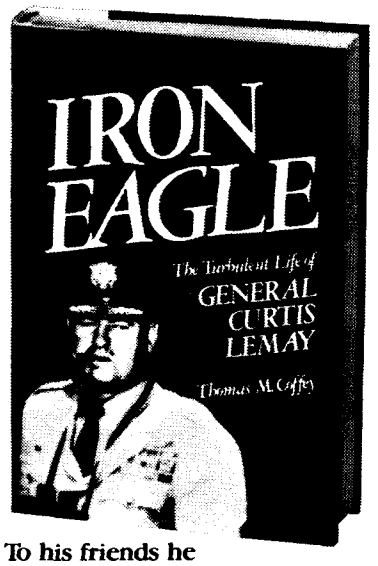
THEY CALLED HIM *"THE DIPLOMAT."* BUT NOT IN THE KENNEDY WHITE HOUSE.



To his friends he was "The Diplomat" (an ironic nickname earned him by his blunt outspokenness). To his superiors, including President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense McNamara, he was a (frequently maddening) force to be reckoned with. To his men he was hell-on-wheels. To 1960's America he was the Patton of air power—the superhawk honcho who wanted to "bomb Vietnam back into the Stone Age" (words he never uttered).

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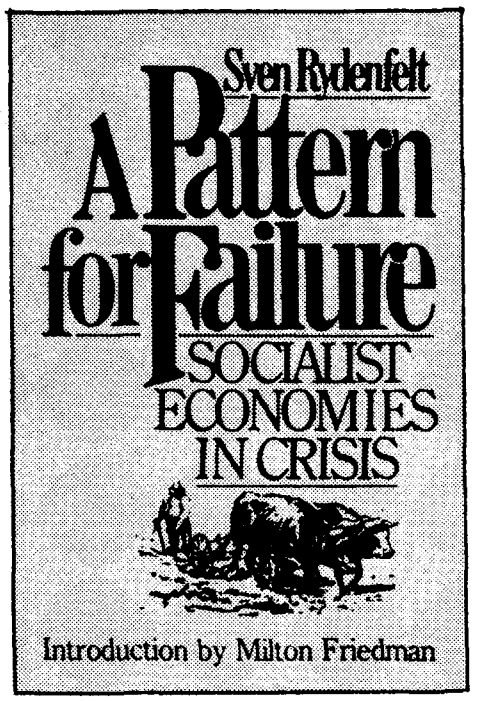

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•It was an unusually somber May Day in the socialist motherland. Some hansdoodle at the Soviets' ultra-modern Chernobyl nuclear reactor blew the hell out of the thing, destroying a large number of government-owned ox carts and setting fire to the reactor's thatched roof. Local communications were disrupted, and radioactive effluvium drizzled all over Europe before officials reopened the telegraph line to inform Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, the amiable Soviet leader. In fact it was eighteen days before the Kremlin's Great Communicator publicly addressed himself to the mishap, and even then he seemed to be in a state of uncustomary confusion, calling upon the West to renew efforts at nuclear disarmament. Apparently Mr. Gorbachev was under the impression that the Chernobyl explosion had resulted from a NATO attack, which, if that were Mr. Gorbachev's assumption, suggests that the Soviet Union is even more peace-loving than Western sages such as the esteemed Mr. Anthony Lewis have been asseverating. In Ischia, Italy, famed horticulturist Mrs. Maria Di Meglio filed suit against Soviet President Andrei Gromyko, claiming that the Chernobyl accident was responsible for the destruction of her vegetable patch. And in Rome a French entrepreneur was charged with fraud when it was discovered that what he had sold to Italian television, NBC, and ABC was not the film of Chernobyl's burning reactor but of Trieste's Cattinara Hospital, a local eyesore.

•The flight of a $700,000 pterosaur replica ended prematurely when it lost its head high above Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland and crashed. Guwahati, India remained unseasonably dry despite frog marriages of amazing cogency and charm. Mrs. Linda Gilbert, the "Worm Lady" of greater Roosevelt, Utah, may no longer extract nightcrawlers from the local cemetery, even though a local orator of great gifts argued that relatives of the interred all appreciated Mrs. Gilbert's efforts to reduce the cemetery's worm population. Mrs. Corazon Aquino announced the names of fifty savants who will devise a new Philippine constitution, and in Prague, Czechoslovakia, all candidates supported by the ruling Communist party were elected to parliament, with a wholesome voter turnout of 99%.

•Mr. Gore Vidal's cause picked up a new defender. Writing in the *New Republic*, Mr. John Hinckley, Jr. defends Mr. Vidal against those who charge him with anti-Semitism, and the promising young neoliberal concludes that "The easiest way to defame someone and his opinions is to label him as 'looney' and 'ready for the funny farm.' It happens to me all the time. The opinions of Gore Vidal and myself are just as valid as yours, and just because we disagree with you does not mean we are crazy." Look for more of this young man's elocutions in *TNR*; the magazine is leaping from strength to strength. Male students at Harvard's Science Center have had to get the hang of moving their bowels in public now that doors have been removed from the toilet stalls in the male comfort station. Local homosexuals had turned the comfort station into a lovers' lane, and university officials feared that within the closed toilet stalls bodily fluids might be exchanged. And President Reagan asked Congress to demonstrate its gratitude for Prime Minister Thatcher's azygous support of the U.S. attack on Libya by passing an extradition treaty that would prevent IRA terrorists from achieving sanctuary here.

•May 10 was the first day of Ramadan and the day on which Mr. Jimmy Carter, who was once our President, announced plans to organize an international foundation to combat human rights abuses. Beyond establishing an annual award honoring a "human rights hero" Mr. Carter was vague as to his foundation's projects, though a commendable project did present itself early in the month when *New Society*, a British weekly concerned with social issues, reported that the technology now exists for men to have babies. According to the magazine, heretofore nulliparous homosexuals, transsexuals, and men whose wives are infertile will be able to know the joy of motherhood by having an embryo implanted into the bowel or large intestine, once a donated egg has been duly fertilized with the requisite sperm. The project will be complicated, but Mr. Carter doubtless will have access to all the details when the operation is included in his local grammar school's sex education curriculum; or perhaps Mr. Hinckley will be commissioned to do a piece for the *New Republic*.

•Albuquerque, New Mexico continues to be haunted by bizarre violence, and now a boy has been charged with killing his father with a bow and arrow in response to his father's confiscation of items that the boy used in Satan worship, possibly at a nearby Unitarian church. In Ironton, Ohio, the Rev. Jim Brown notified a seminar at the First Church of the Nazarene that the theme song to the "Mr. Ed" television show abounds with satanic messages when the song is reversed, and promptly led seventy head of the faithful in a record-album burning. In the north Indian state of Punjab fifty Sikhs got pro bono shoeshines from Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, the state's top official, who was seeking atonement for the mess his soldiers made when they recently fell upon the Sikhs' Golden Temple in Amritsar. Mr. Taher Yahya, the former Iraqi prime minister, died of natural causes, as did the lovable Theodore H. White.

•Justice has been served in Woodbury, New Jersey where Judge Elliott G. Heard, Jr. declared that Mr. Harry Kostic, 32, must be imprisoned for allegedly beating his estranged girlfriend, Miss Beverly Swain, with her 18-inch pet iguana and then coercing her into eating parts of the unhappy reptile. In Washington, D.C. Miss Annette Williams, 22, was charged with the second-degree murder of her sister after a quarrel over an allegedly miscooked potato, or *pomme de terre* as the gastronome might say. Mr. Vladimir Horowitz ended his triumphal tour of the USSR much to the relief of Soviet police, who were repeatedly faced with the prospect of having to arrest his irritable wife for one outburst after another.

•On May 16 Mr. Jackie Presser, president of the Teamsters' Union, was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of embezzlement and racketeering; and four days later he was carried into the ballroom of Caesar's Palace on a golden sedan chair borne by four men clad as Roman centurions. It was the Teamsters' national convention, and the throng shouted "Hail Caesar." Shortly thereafter the three-hundred pounder was elected to another five-year term. On May 23 Mr. George L. Belair, an unsuccessful city council candidate in Minneapolis, was charged with violating a state campaign law by distributing Twinkies to opsomaniacal senior citizens. Mr. Anatoly B. Shcharansky paid his respects to President Reagan in the White House, while at Harvard University 45 of an estimated 550 people in attendance at an Institute of Politics public forum vamoosed when Attorney General Edwin Meese III was introduced.

•The Senate Finance Committee unanimously passed a tax-reform bill that dramatically simplifies tax forms and gives taxpayers supply-side tax relief,

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nearly halving the present top rate and dropping the only other rate to 15 percent. The Senate passed a $1 trillion budget resolution. Miss Valerie Terrigno, the first professed lesbian mayor of an American city, was sentenced to sixty days in custody and ordered to repay nearly $7,000 in embezzled poverty funds. And on May 26 approximately 4,924,000 Americans held hands along a 4,125-mile route from sea to shining sea to raise $50 million to "assault hunger and homelessness." That will be added to the $476 billion that the federal government now spends on "human resources." In 1964 the government spent $35 billion. The crisis goes on and this time stupidity has been enthroned.

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Aids Science

In their article on AIDS ("The Coming of AIDS," *TAS*, March 1986) James F. Grutsch, Jr. and A.D.J. Robertson complain of confusion concerning AIDS being "compounded by ill-informed reporting in which laymen, often from special-interest groups with their own furrows to plow, express opinions about scientific matters." After reading their article it seems that they are guilty either of what they accuse others, or of a more serious offense: deliberately deceptive reporting in order to further their own self-interests at the expense of the reputation of *The American Spectator*. While the authors may not be laymen, neither are they virologists.

The substandard scientific descriptions that are present throughout the article begin with Kuru and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease being called "slow viruses" by the authors. In fact, no virus particles have ever been isolated from tissues infected by these diseases. Research on these diseases has resulted in most scientists calling the agents of these infections "prions" (protein infectious particles). The inclusion of these diseases in a discussion concerning AIDS (which is known to be caused by a virus) is questionable.

At the very least, Grutsch and Robertson overstate their case in comparing other lentiviruses to HTLV III/LAV (the AIDS virus). While it is true that LAV is a lentivirus and that correlations on its behavior can be made from other lentiviruses, certain distinctions must also be made. Even though two viruses can be classified together in the same subfamily or genus, their modes of transmission can be drastically different. As an example, consider the genus of viruses called Alphaherpes viruses. Within this genus are the viruses that cause both chicken pox and venereal herpes, but no serious scientist would claim that venereal herpes is transmitted in the same way that chicken pox is transmitted. Yet the authors lead the reader to believe that this could be the case with AIDS and other lentiviruses. I find it extremely difficult to understand why the authors failed to make this crucial distinction.

Grutsch and Robertson correctly state that LAV can be transmitted through heterosexual as well as homosexual intercourse. It seems, however, that this was not satisfactory for them and they set out to make the spread of AIDS to the entire population seem even more likely. In this attempt, they cite the apparent transmission of AIDS to members of households in England and Italy. An additional case has been recently cited here in the United States. What each of these cases has in common is the fact that AIDS was transmitted by close and prolonged contact with body secretions and excretions during intensive nursing care without so much as the use of gloves. In the U.S. case, the woman who caught the virus from her child often failed to wash her hands after giving such care. In the case in England, the woman who caught AIDS gave similar care to a Ghanian man whom she denied having any sexual contact with. She recalled having small cuts on her hands in addition to chronic eczema. Grutsch and Robertson fail to mention these important facts in an apparent attempt to lend credibility to their completely unsubstantiated claim that it is possible for AIDS to be spread by coughing, insect vectors, and even through cow's milk. To call this hypothesis ludicrous would be an understatement.

Furthermore, the authors' statement that the overall fatality rate may approach 100 percent is also completely unsubstantiated. While they are correct in stating that the fatality rates are too conservative, the evidence hardly indicates that the fatality rate will come anywhere near 100 percent. The authors are also guilty of equating exposure to the virus and productive infection (i.e., actually having a case of AIDS). To take an example from another disease again, does an individual who gives a positive skin test for tuberculosis actually have the disease? No, he may or may not have it. All that giving a positive immunological result shows is that one has been exposed to the disease (or in some cases, has been immunized against it).

Finally, Grutsch and Robertson make an appeal for quarantine of all AIDS patients. While it may be entirely appropriate to isolate those who develop secondary diseases that can be transmitted by casual contact, quarantine of all AIDS patients would be unwarranted (since AIDS cannot be transmitted through casual contact) and would ultimately fail to stop the spread of AIDS. Given the long latency of the disease, even if all those who were found to be immunopositive for AIDS (again, not necessarily having AIDS) were isolated from those who gave a negative ELISA test, you could never completely eliminate the disease.

In short, it is clear that AIDS is a very serious threat. Yes, its modes of transmission make an excellent case for monogamy. At the same time, however, it seems that an even more contagious disease in our society is one whose symptoms arise whenever AIDS is discussed, and it mimics hyperthyroidism rather closely. It seems that seeing their names in print was too much of a temptation for the authors to resist, and they capitalized on the fear of the unknown on the part of the public in order to attain this goal. Hopefully this will be the last time we see LaRouchian doctrine in the pages of *The American Spectator*, except, perhaps, in the "Current Wisdom" section.

—John J. Cunniff
Microbiology Program
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

James F. Grutsch, Jr. and A.D.J. Robertson reply:

Kuru and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (C-J) are generally referred to as slow viral diseases because they show an etiology of infection by a filterable particle but a symptom-free period of many years. We mentioned them to illustrate the points that there are already recognized diseases, with long latencies, causing neural damage leading to death in people, and that they may be spread by unusual behavior and by medical technology. C-J in fact is spread not only in preparations of human growth hormone, but also by surgical instruments, the stereotaxic equipment used in neurosurgery, and tissue used in grafts. The Aids virus, we know, is spread in protein preparations (Factor VIII), by needles, possibly in general surgery, and definitely in organ transplants, so the parallel is instructive rather than far-fetched.

It is true that no virus has been isolated from the tissue of Kuru or C-J victims and the protein fibrils are found in characteristic patterns in the brains of those infected. Similar fibrils are found in other diseases, including scrapie and the other infections producing "spongiform encephalopathies" in mammals including man. Because preparations containing these proteins are infectious it has been suggested that a new kind of disease carried by Prions—protein infectious particles—might exist. This possibility flies in the face of our understanding of molecular biology; for this reason its author himself advised great skepticism. Now that it is known that the proteins are translated from nucleic acids found in all host cells, not just in those infected with Kuru or the other diseases, most people doing research in this field would say, as does the discoverer of Kuru, that "prions . . . should be replaced by a term that . . . avoid[s] the increasingly unlikely contention that the protein itself is infectious" (*New England Journal of Medicine*, February 27, 1986, page 550). Similar hypotheses were entertained about other viruses before their nucleic acids were isolated; this was true, for example, of Tobacco Mosaic Virus, which is quite large, but has a very tough protein coat.

The viruses causing venereal herpes can be transmitted in many ways, including kissing and possibly sneezing, just like the chicken-pox virus. In their venereal manifestation they are usually (not always) transmitted in the ways we call venereal, but venereal herpes is not a separate disease.

We do not understand Mr. Cunniff's statements "Grutsch and Robertson overstate their case in comparing other lentiviruses to the . . . Aids virus" and "it is true that the Aids virus is a lentivirus," which seem to us mutually contradictory. The more we know about the Aids virus, the more useful the comparison has become; in particular all the ways in which the Aids virus is *known* to be transmitted have been found in the other lentiviruses, which makes it only prudent to be alert for transmission in ways known for lentiviruses in general, but not for the Aids virus in particular. The confusion here perhaps lies in the concept of transmission. What we know about the transmission of the Aids virus reflects the commonest methods; homosexual men usually transmit the virus by sodomy because they indulge in it, just as surgeons have transmitted it by organ transplant. As more in the heterosexual population become infected, more heterosexual transmission will occur. We know from experiments that one virus particle can infect a cell; what we do not know is how many particles are usually needed for infection by each possible route. For example, it might be almost impossible to be infected by being in a room with one AIDS victim coughing, but quite likely with twenty—we simply do not know. Since the virus is found in respiratory secretions we know that infection in this way is theoretically possible; we just don't know, yet, how likely it is and no epidemiological study to date is sufficiently sensitive to tell us. This is not the fault of the epidemiology, but of the fact that too few people have been infected long enough to reveal effects of this kind.

The purpose of our article was to stimulate public debate before we reach the stage at which so many people are infected with the Aids virus that, if it is possible at all—and, as Mr. Cunniff agrees, we know it is—contagion by frequent contact becomes likely. After all, neither syphilis nor leprosy is passed by casual contact, and both are generally curable, yet we do not hesitate to restrict the freedoms of those infected with either. Any lethal venereal disease is bad enough in itself; one that produces a permanently infectious carrier state should not be allowed to spread under any circumstances, even if it cannot be passed by casual contact, whatever that is.

The Aids virus cannot be compared to the bacillus which causes tuberculosis. All the evidence to date is that infection with it is permanent and that production of antibodies implies infection, not merely exposure. As to the overall fatality rate, this of course is not yet known. The most detailed studies show unequivocally that over 90 percent of those infected have a measurable immune dysfunction and over 50 percent have at least one serious symptom. In the oldest cohorts studied the attack rate of AIDS itself has been found to reach 40 percent, without any sign of diminution; these figures, of course, do not include those for morbidity and mortality not included in the surveillance definition of AIDS. In particular, they do not include death due to brain damage caused directly by the virus. The highest AIDS incidences found so far are approximately 11 percent per year within three to four years of infection.

Finally, as far as we can discover (from the denizens of a booth at Logan Airport), the views of Mr. LaRouche coincide with ours to the extent that we all think it sensible to stop the spread of infection with the Aids virus; clearly Mr. Cunniff agrees here with both us and Mr. LaRouche. □

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EDITORIALS

DO-NOTHING DEAVER

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Knowledgeable followers of the great game of politics realize that one of the gauges by which a politico is measured is embedded in the late Mayor Richard J. Daley's honored question, "What have you done for me lately?" Its assumption of shared obligation lends to the hum and drum of political organization a certain nobility, to say nothing of a certain effectiveness. From all of the lurid charges that now glow above and about the words *Michael K. Deaver*, one might think that this former White House aide and present PR prodigy did quite a lot during his White House years and for multitudes.

But hold! A glance at the indignant mobs now maneuvering to do him in suggests that Mr. Deaver did not do nearly enough. In theory, had Mr. Deaver sagaciously dispensed favors during his days at the Palace he would now be shielded by legions of grateful friends, all steadfast in defense of him and of the system that served them well. In fact, right-wingers and left-wingers, journalists and politicians—all are avid to lay him low. In truth, Mr. Deaver was a very stingy dispenser of favors. Occasionally he may have winked fetchingly at a prospective client, but he was no great malefactor as will be proved in due course.

He did have a talent for offending people. Many gifted politicians are possessed of an extraordinary charm. Theodore Roosevelt was born with it. Franklin Roosevelt learned it. Mike Deaver seems to have been born with its opposite. Since the mid-1970s I have on numerous occasions personally observed Mr. Deaver's mysterious knack for giving offense. Possibly it is a genetic defect. At any rate the consequences of his niggardliness and of his offensiveness are vividly observable in his present public trials.

I suspect that those innocent vessels of charm, Ronald and Nancy Reagan, recognized their loyal aide's weakness long ago, and that is one reason they have stood by him so loyally. But there is another reason for their fidelity. If Mr. Deaver never really has understood politics—not in the grand sense of clashing ideas and changing powers, nor in the pedestrian sense of shared obligations—he understood modern media politics. What Camelot in the 1960s confected with fustian and the camera, Mr. Deaver and his associates brought to the level of masterpiece. There were the timed speeches and staged events. There was the speech two years ago on a wind-swept summit in Normandy and then the legendary 1984 campaign. And consider our recent 12-minute raid on Libya. Has anyone noted that it began just as the evening news was getting underway and that it was over in time for the networks' scheduled commercials? Critics carp that until very recently Mr. Deaver was still privy to the President's daily schedule. If he can do for me the wonders he has done for the President he can have my schedule too, and I shall even include a small gratuity.

Now, however, we hear that justice is hot on his trail. Soon a shocking *corpus delicti* will be heaved up and it will be the gallows for this rogue, or at least confinement and hard labor. Well, devotees of Puritan justice ought not to get their hopes up. Maybe Mr. Deaver will be found guilty of high crimes or perhaps only a minor statutory violation will be hung on him. Then too, as with so many other recent ephemeral scandals, the scandalizer may get off scot-free.

The press has gotten us in a lather over the alleged infamies of 110 Reagan Administration eminences, and what have we the people got to show for it? Only six were ever indicted. Two were acquitted. Two were jugged. And two still await trial. By this measurement the entire Reagan Administration compares rather more favorably than one Democratic family prominent in the last presidential election. Asserting that no other administration has had so many of its appointees accused of impropriety, Administration critics claim that we should hold it suspect. Actually if one weighs the puny outcome of all these accusations we are more justified in holding these wanton accusers suspect.

What is it that this Administration and that this rogue Deaver are guilty of? It is not the old-style graft, the critics admit, but rather the "appearance of impropriety." Well, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and in an age utterly bereft of standards, appearances are simply a matter of taste. What appears as uniquely grasping to Democrats might well appear to Republicans as typical Democratic behavior practiced more efficiently. It is ironic that Mr. Deaver—a master at creating appearances for pols—is, along with the Reagan Administration, being condemned on the grounds of mere appearances. And, *mirabile dictu*, those condemning him are utterly unaware of how they appear, to wit: as mere political opportunists. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

THE GREAT EXPLAINERS

"Why do they hate me," the sorely pressed Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. must wonder as he reads the day's newspapers and puzzles over how luridly he is portrayed on TV news. Ever since two of his numbskulls captured lofty slots on the Democratic ticket in Illinois, LaRouche and LaRouchism have been the subjects of the Republic's indefatigable investigative reporters and of alarmed Democrats remonstrating against LaRouche's vows to infiltrate further into their party.

LaRouche's wonderment is understandable. After all, he is just another in our country's long line of Wondrous Explainers. To troubled pinheads LaRouche presents himself enhaloed with the promise that he can explain everything: high interest rates, foreign wars, high inflation rates, newfangled ways, high employment rates, foreign-born strangers in our midsts. Here in America, as elsewhere, there will always be tremulous little people of dim intellect and hyperactive imagination, burning for explanations to all life's vicissitudes. They grow impatient with learned analyses of the present. They are defeated by histories that illuminate the past. No species of scholarship or analysis could ever satisfy them; for they need that Wondrous Explanation that will quiet all their fears, thrill them with villains to revile, and never tax their feeble powers of intellection. Bizarre fellows like LaRouche are quick to posit the Explanations: It is the bankers! British Intelligence! the Queen of England! the Rockefellers! the international drug cabal! Zionists! Deeper, ever deeper they dig into history's grab bag of bugaboos to explain what every intelligent mind knows can never be wholly explained.

Yet not all the Wondrous Explainers of our time are in bad odor, which doubtless is the cause of LaRouche's recent hopes and present dismay. Since the 1960s Wondrous Explainers have stepped ever closer toward the centers of American power. This is particularly true in the Democratic party where radical notions have often been con-

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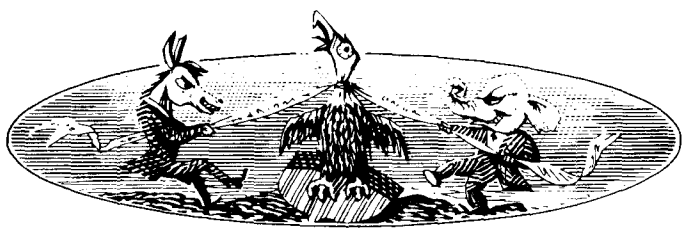
fused with high-minded idealism to the ruin of every Democratic presidential candidate since 1964, save one. LaRouche must have recognized that were he to enter the staid primaries of the Republicans his zanies would attract unwanted attention. Instead, full of hope and enthusiasm, he sent them into that party where fantasticos vie with standard pols, where the Rev. Jim Jones of the erstwhile People's Temple could fetch the admiration of the eminent, where something as curious as the Rainbow Coalition regularly resounds with hubbubs about *The Rich! The Bankers! The Arms Contractors!*

So why after performing well at the polls is poor Lyndon the subject of such wide suspicion? I confess it beats me. Is it that too many of his conspiracies embrace ethnic and religious slurs? All this is behind LaRouche, he insists. He wants forgiveness and forgetfulness. Forgiveness and forgetfulness were extended to the Rev. Jackson after his essays into anti-Semitism and related kookery during the 1984 presidential primaries. Gore Vidal is forgiven his excesses, both on the campaign trail when he seeks a Democratic nomination and in left-wing journals when he spins his yarns of conspiracy about the Rockefellers, the American Empire, the "Heterosexual Dictatorship" that governs us, and the "Israeli fifth columnists" who are everywhere, particularly in the media.

The case of Vidal is particularly timely, for he has just blurted out his anti-Semitic hallucinations in a recent issue of the *Nation*, and in it he has actually come up with a bugaboo that I had not heard of before. Vidal believes there is an Oriental conspiracy shaping up that menaces "white people" both here and in the Soviet Union. "An alliance with the Soviet Union is a necessity," the goony bird declares, and he squawks on about those American Jews whose "first loyalty would always be to Israel."

Now in their confused present as in their recent past, the liberals—once such vigilant defenders of reason and tolerance—simply avert their gaze when bigotry and kookery are blurted out by compatriots. Unlike Jackson and Vidal, LaRouche has never been a legitimate Democrat or liberal, and so his zaniness, I suppose, will not receive the liberals' dispensation. Moreover he does not have the troops that Jackson musters or the goofball charm of Vidal. But wait until he gets wind of Vidal's thesis on the exotic Orient. Sony will be in trouble. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



DAS KAPITAL IDEAS II

by Tom Bethell

In Leningrad Airport there were soldiers and airmen everywhere. The country seemed to be semi-mobilized. We were kept waiting for our flight to Tbilisi, and in the Soviet Union you soon learn to wait patiently. Nearby was a group of Syrians with a caged bird.

The Aeroflot jet itself seemed to have seen recent military use. We were packed in uncomfortably tight: knee to kidney. In pitiful mimicry of Western ways, an attendant once during our three-hour flight brought around a tray with plastic cups of metallic-tasting water.

I sat next to Larry Moffitt, who told me a little about the Unification Church. Members apparently believe that Communism fulfills the biblical prediction of the Antichrist. This brought to mind Whittaker Chambers's apocalyptic foreword to *Witness* (1952): "I see in Communism the focus of the concentrated evil of our time. . . . Within the next decades is to be decided for generations whether all mankind is to become Communist." And Comrade Gorbachev said at the Party Congress in February: "This is perhaps the most alarming period in history."

I could see little other than haze from the window. How our satellites know where to look for their mobile missiles is a mystery to me and I suspect to the Pentagon. Presently the icy terrain of the Caucasus came into view and we seemed to fly quite close to one tremendous peak. One had heard horror stories about Aeroflot. Lev Navrozov said that when a plane crashes they simply bulldoze earth over the wreckage and nothing is reported in the newspapers. So it was a relief to touch down in Tbilisi, brightly lit in a valley between the mountain passes.

Georgia, USSR, is about the same size and has about the same population as Georgia, USA. One was tempted to think of Tbilisi (pop. 1.2 million) as their Atlanta. Georgia has its own language and alphabet, which the Russians tried to suppress a few years back. This could be seen as the reverse of our own dotty anti-melting pot efforts—funding bilingual education, preserving Cajun French, and so on. But the Russians found themselves with a Georgian rebellion on their hands and so they abandoned their exercise in cultural imperialism.

The main street, named after a Georgian poet called Rustaveli (why are poets so worshiped in our socialist age?), was brightly lit. There were sidewalk flowerbeds and roadside trees. The city had a dusty, Moorish, Mediterranean air—most agreeable after Leningrad's muddy battleship gray. We all felt much more cheerful. The next day Rick Brookhiser said, I believe accurately: "We have come to a place that is culturally and economically on the level of Turkey, and we are overjoyed."

Our hotel, the Iveria, was built in the early seventies, a somewhat ramshackle but quite pleasant 20-story tower with Hilton-ish aspirations. The doorman gave us a non-Communist bow as we came in. Civility was still alive south of the Caucasus, apparently. Interior hotel signs were in English only: Service Bureau. Night Bar. Currency Exchange. At the Service Bureau the next day a radio was playing "Chattanooga Choo Choo." Strolling Yanks wore pastel pants.

Imagine you went to the main hotel in Atlanta and all the signs were in Russian. And only in Russian. What would you think? And imagine that illegal entrepreneurs on the streets were trying to spot Russian tourists so they could change dollars for more desirable roubles. Teenagers sought out Russian clothes and danced to Russian music. On the radio: Hits from Moscow.

I could see why the Communists think capitalism is imperialistic. It really is—at the level of commerce. Of course it leaves intact the machinery of government, but it does bring pressure to bear at the more fundamental level of social organization itself. At the Party Congress Gorbachev noted with alarm that capitalism's "productive forces" have "grown to gigantic proportions." The result is that non-democratic countries trying to preserve a regime of privilege against the forces of property are under increasing strain. Gorbachev was in a way correct to speak of the "crisis of capitalism as anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism." International capitalism subjects Communism to intolerable competitive pressure, as long as it does not simultaneously pay tribute in the form of subsidies (which it does).

Describing her recent stay in the Soviet Union (Tbilisi in fact) Stalin's daughter Svetlana told the *New York Times*: "You could meet a taxi driver, or a man selling vegetables at the bazaar, suddenly bursting forth into talk about how much 'private property is needed,' or 'nothing can be done without private initiative.' I was surprised how people began to talk about that, without even being asked. It must have been on everyone's mind." It was certainly on mine.

In intelligence jargon, one hears much talk of organizations being "penetrated" by the enemy. In fact capitalism really has penetrated Communist societies—and at the dangerous level of practical reality and human nature as it is. By contrast Western societies are not so much penetrated (in the intelligence sense) as infested by people who dream of human nature as-it-might-be. They would be harmless, but for the fact that they wield considerable power at home, and act as the guardian-pro-

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Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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tectors of Communist power abroad.

Larry Moffitt, on his third tour of the Soviet Union, said the more you move away from the center, that is from Moscow, the more attenuated Communist power becomes. Tbilisi seemed to be a good deal freer, more productive, more relaxed than Leningrad. There were more cars on the streets and more goods in the shops. Obviously, there was a fair amount of *de facto* capitalism. And a Party crackdown would only undermine the productivity upon which Moscow depends. Wherein lies the dilemma of the Communists: Let them produce, or keep them under control, one or the other, because both cannot be achieved. Central planning is only ostensibly a method of economic production. In fact it is a technique of political control.

Our Intourist guide, Lali, a cultivated Georgian, told us on the bus that 20 percent of the houses in Tbilisi are privately owned (presumably inherited, not sold). She was obviously proud of Georgia, often carefully distinguishing it from Russia.

"I could live here," said an expansive Arnold Beichman one day. "They're nice people and they're obviously not Communists!" He foresaw a great increase in U.S. tourism to the Eastern bloc. (This was about three weeks before the Chernobyl disaster.) "You can have a drink here without worrying about someone dropping some plastique."

We went to Gori, the birthplace of Stalin, thirty-five miles away. On the way we stopped at an ancient monastery perched on a hilltop, and at an eleventh-century Orthodox cathedral. Inside an old man was kneeling, holding a candle, and crossing himself whenever some East European Party members who had arrived in a Chaika limousine came too close.

Our Gori goal was the Stalin museum. First we saw the log-cabin affair where Stalin grew up. Sometimes it seems there must be a Humble Origins Indentikit for World Famous People: bare floorboards (please ignore the velvet rope), simple pitcher on functional table, chair for Papa Stalin: everything scrubbed, righteous, and minimal, somehow fit for the Museum of Modern Art.

A lady with yellowish hair showed us the museum. She greatly admired Stalin and was not aware that we had (mostly) come to gawk in a spirit of ironic amusement. This may well have been a mistaken attitude on our part. Was Stalin different in kind from other Soviet rulers, or only in degree?

Stalin (born 1879) had a beautiful velvet voice, the lady told us. He was a poetic child, a dreamer; his first poems patriotic, people should struggle for a better life. Here were his favorite books from the library. These were members of a Marxist group in Tbilisi; they studied in the seminary with Stalin. Seminary today is an art museum. Stalin became a professional revolutionary at age fifteen; expelled from seminary because of his revolutionary activities there. (In West today, I thought, seminary revolution is at level of doctrine, liberation theology.)

Later Beichman asked the guide: Premier Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin was in 1956. The Stalin museum opened in 1957. How come?

"We are the people of contradictions," she replied.

The Georgian Museum of Art, Lenin Square, Tbilisi. "Stalin lived here: 1894-99." Here was a fresco of the Archangel Gabriel. There was an icon of the Transfiguration from a nearby monastery. Here the famous Khakhuli triptych—notice the cloisonné enamel technique—incorporating a tenth-century icon of the Virgin. "Georgia was committed to be the country of Our Lady," Lali told us. Now look at

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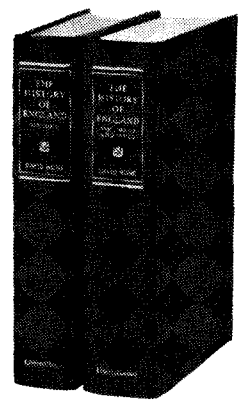

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this, a sixth-century icon, not painted by human hand according to legend—one of those miraculous icons . . . Could she tell us what particular room Stalin lived in, someone asked. No, it was a kind of boarding school, you see.

Dutifully, she took us upstairs to see the modern works. "And this is the period of the so-called socialist realism in art," she said. "I don't think you need an explanation." It was the icons she had wanted us to see.

Back at the hotel the word was that Senator Kennedy had been on Moscow TV, urging the U.S. to stop nuclear tests. On a tour bus we saw a bumper sticker: San Franciscans for a Nuclear Freeze. And in the dining room we met some homebodies from the American-Soviet Friendship Society. They were on an enraptured three-week, *Nation*-advertised tour of the Soviet Union. Everything was wonderful: no unemployment, no crime, no profiteering, and don't forget: twenty million killed in World War II. A lady from New York who refused to give her name loudly said: "Tell them that unless we live in peace with the socialist countries we shall all die."

Six of them sat at a table right behind ours. Disarmament was imperative, one said. "If you're not going to war what do you need that junk for?"

By how much should we disarm?

"Fifty percent," one said, only to be overruled by another: "A hundred percent."

Any repression in the USSR?

"No sir!"

Religious persecution?

"No sir!"

Anti-Semitism?

"No sir!"

"Oh, this is delicious ginger ale," one of their party said. "Boy, do I like to take a drink of ginger ale."

Everything they had seen was wonderful and everything would continue to be wonderful. Upcoming on their itinerary was Kiev. That too would be wonderful. They had already been on Soviet television and no doubt would be again.

Lali, a couple of tables away, had noticed our altercation. I went over to explain: In the Soviet Union Communism is compulsory, at least for the ambitious. In America it is voluntary. And quite a few people really do have faith in it. That is, they believe that a Communist society can be achieved without force. "They don't call themselves Communists," I said. "They don't even think of themselves as Communists, but their state of mind is Communist."

Lali discreetly said nothing. But she listened attentively.

I suspect that on any given day the Soviet Union is honeycombed with American true believers, whose faith I think is constantly needed to lift Soviet spirits weighed down by the leaden weight of Communist reality. Chernobyl will reduce their numbers, but not their outlook. Such people are radically hostile to a free society which fails to insist that all believe in the same thing and work collectively to attain it.

In Leningrad we had met an American woman who was attempting to set up an Alcoholics Anonymous chapter—with the approval of the Soviet authorities. Still, she was subjected to a humiliating body search for bringing in a Radio Shack computer.

Was not AA based on a belief in a Supreme Being, Moffitt asked her.

She said they were modifying it for Soviet consumption.

"You may be removing the active ingredient that makes it work."

"It's either that or no AA." She asked Moffitt how he had found the Soviet Union.

"Well, repressive."

"You're just saying the same old thing."

"That's because it's been true for a long time." Had she been inside Soviet

(continued on page 48)

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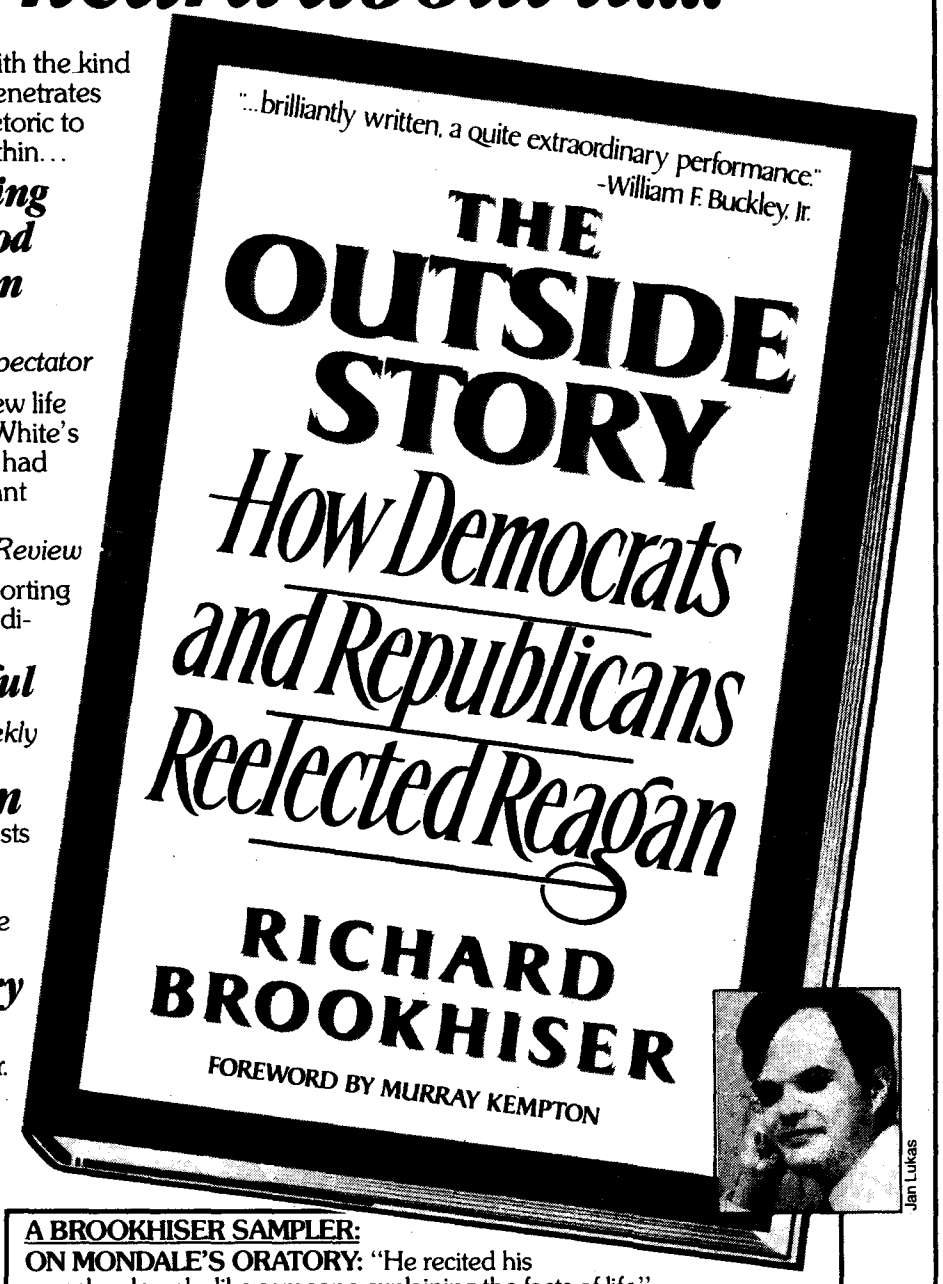

A BROOKHISER SAMPLER:
ON MONDALE'S ORATORY: "He recited his speech solemnly, like someone explaining the facts of life."
ON FERRARO'S SOPHISTICATION: "She pegged her discussion of Lebanon and Central America to trips she had taken there as a Congresswoman....She referred to them for the same reason Baudelaire wrote about sin, or Thomas Wolfe about Asheville: it was all they knew."
ON CUOMO'S ABORTION STAND: "He had found, in consensus and prudence, a way of having religion when he wanted it and not having it when he didn't."
ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: "Americans believe in the brotherhood of man or in the war of the worlds, not in balance of power."

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Fred Barnes

THE BOOK ON STOCKMAN

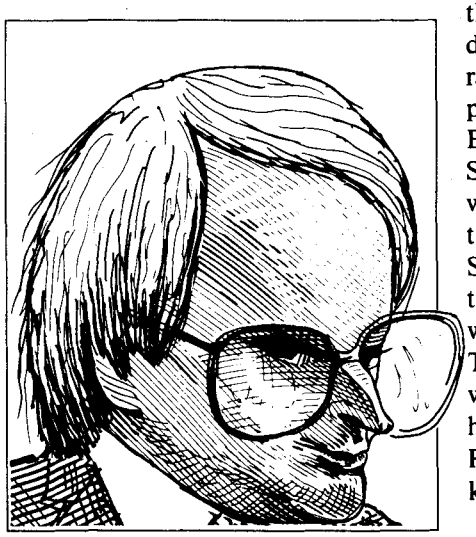
The Administration asked for it.

Here's the way I figure it. Ronald Reagan has done mighty well in this life. He's the most popular President at this stage—second year, second term—ever. And political writer after political writer, upon scanning David Stockman's book,[1] has rushed to attack Stockman and defend Reagan. Hugh Sidey of *Time* declared that "long years of leadership that hone instincts and crystallize common sense," Reagan's long suit, in other words, are more important than anything an arrogant young policy entrepreneur like Stockman might offer. George Will noted in his syndicated column that the nation used to worry about Reagan's age, but now "Stockman's book demonstrates how youth can be a menace to good governance." And in the *Washington Post*, William Schneider said Reagan was doing fine as President, while Stockman's book left him with "an inescapable conclusion: David Stockman is a stinker."

The Reagan presidency should survive without a rousing defense from me. So I pass. But Stockman is clearly in a heap of trouble. As George Bush would say, Stockman has stepped in "deep doo-doo." Okay, so he made a cool $2.5 million on the book deal. And he's got a fancy job with a New York investment firm, doing who knows what. But given the pummeling his book has taken, Stockman is on the verge of not being taken seriously at all in Washington. And that would be a mistake. His book is crudely written, he is overwrought on the matter of the federal budget deficit, and his overarching policy advice (raise taxes, you dopes!) is wrongheaded in the extreme. Yet he has something to say, especially to a smug administration that nowadays spends most of the daylight hours celebrating itself. His message is this: you haven't done half as good a job as you think you have.

Stockman is flat-out right about that. The deficit is hardly as dangerous as Stockman says, but it is a problem and it might have been avoided. How? Reagan could have used up a little of his popularity by leading the fight for deep spending cuts. He didn't. He could have stood firmly against the costly ornaments that were unnecessarily added to the 1981 tax cut. He didn't. Or if narrowing the deficit seems too prosaic a goal, he could have utilized the 1984 presidential campaign, which he was certain to win, to make the positive case for a sharply pruned government, namely that it is better for everyone, the poor included. He didn't. Stockman argues the reason is simply that Reagan is not a revolutionary, but a conventional politician who isn't interested in sweeping change.

I resisted this conclusion, but I wavered after Stockman unloaded a few vignettes. You'd think Reagan, of all people, would be wary of billions given to Exxon, Union Oil, and some gas pipelines to build synthetic fuel plants. But no. The unfettered marketplace had lost its magic in this case. So when adviser Edwin Meese informed him that the companies had plunked down a small bit of their own money, the President was fully persuaded. "We can't cause an honest business to lose money," he said. Reagan wouldn't cause the Veterans Administration, a $27 billion complex of programs, to spend less, either. "Whatever tiny veterans' cuts I managed to stuff into the budget were made instantly nonoperative by [VA administrator Harry] Walters's ability to claim with impunity that he spoke for the President," writes Stockman. "No one at the White House ever said he didn't."



Worse still was the lingering fraud of the so-called veto strategy. The President seemed to believe that he had such a strategy. In 1984, his advisers urged him to veto all congressional appropriations bills that exceeded the ceilings in his budget. Reagan was ready. "I can't wait to get my pen out," he said. Reagan was "grinning enthusiastically" as he said this, according to Stockman. Well, not many weeks later, the Interior appropriations bill wound up on the President's desk, a mere 25 percent, or $2 billion, over budget. Senator James McClure of Idaho pleaded for approval. "In response I pointed out the obvious," writes Stockman, "that a bill 25 percent over the line was a budget buster by any definition. Could we really afford to raise subsidies to private forests by 140 percent? Did we truly need to layer the Bureau of Mines and Geological Survey with more bureaucratic fat? Did we need $170 million worth of additional spending at the Indian Health Service, the free world's most spectacularly inefficient organization? You want to talk about deficit spending. This bill defines it." Stockman then waited for other advisers to support him. Silence. "On this, yes, I agree," Reagan finally said. "This is not the kind of thing we had in mind to veto."

To defend Reagan, critics like Sidey, Will, and Schneider rely on the notion that he never had deep and painful spending cuts in mind. That was Stockman's idea, a measly director of the Office of Management and Budget overplaying his hand. Not quite. True, Reagan didn't single out specific cuts during his campaign in 1980. But his entire political career prior to reaching the White House consisted of making one major point, namely that the federal government was spending way too much and doing way too much. Washington, to hear Reagan's spiel, was nothing but wretched excess. Was it too much for Stockman to have expected that Reagan would want to back up his rhetoric with actual cuts? I don't think so. If there was ever a President who might be expected to rebel against handouts to interest groups, it was Reagan. But it turned out to be a mighty fainthearted and short-lived rebellion.

Republican politicians in Washington are like that, Stockman says. It's remarkable how quickly they wind up as "patrons of pork," coopted by "the congressional culture and welfare state apparatus. . . . By a gradual but certain process, they became the legislative chambermaids of the welfare state. All that really stood between them and the Democrats was their content-free rhetoric about 'private initiative' and 'fiscal responsibility.' " Above all, they don't share Stockman's vision of "minimalist government—a spare and stingy creature, which offered even-handed public justice, but no more. Its vision of the good society rested on the strength and productive potential of free men in free markets." And so on. Reagan could have written the passage himself. The trouble is, he has no intention of following through and trying, at some political risk, to make it a reality.

Anyway, the best part of Stockman's book is where he spins out his vision

[1] *The Triumph of Politics: Why the Reagan Revolution Failed.* Harper & Row, $21.95.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

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and shows how far short of it the Reagan Administration has fallen. The Reagan failure left such egregious relics as agricultural marketing orders in place. In California, these instruct farmers how many oranges or grapefruit they can market each week. Meese told the President that eliminating the orders would "disrupt" the farmers' marketing plans. And Reagan went along. What shocked Stockman more, though, was when Reagan signed a $2 billion dairy subsidy in 1983. Meese had indicated a veto was coming, and Stockman had spread that word on Capitol Hill. "Now I was the fool, and the reasons revealed the final answer as to why the Reagan White House's anti-spending rhetoric could not be taken seriously," he writes. "The Reaganites were, in the final analysis, just plain welfare state politicians like everybody else."

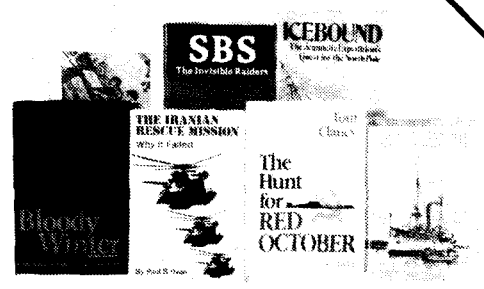
Sad to say, Stockman winds up yielding to them. He spends nearly 400 pages attacking their wimpishness, then capitulates himself. If this is what America's elected leaders favor, then that's got to be what the American people want, he concludes. "The abortive Reagan Revolution proved that the American electorate wants a moderate social democracy to shield it from capitalism's rougher edges," he says. Sure, "special interest groups do wield great power, but their influence is deeply rooted in local popular support." The anti-statist position got a true test under Reagan, Stockman insists, but it "was utterly repudiated by the combined forces of the politicians—Republican and Democrat, those in the executive branch as well as the legislative."

This is nonsense, and I don't think Stockman believes it for a moment. Maybe hanging around Reagan for so long made him want to exit on an upbeat note. It's a false note. Better than anyone, he knows that billions and billions are spent on programs that benefit the precious few simply because small groups often mount effective lobbies in Washington. Just because it happens doesn't mean it is democracy at its best. Who is helped by Urban Development Action Grants, which build fancy hotels in cities? Not the poor. Not the middle class. Only mayors, who have more money to play with. Who is better off for there having been an Economic Development Administration? Not many people, I'll wager. EDA, remember, is the outfit that paid for the carving of a limestone model of the Great Wall of China, in Indiana. I don't think the American people demanded this. There's no way Stockman could think so, either.

So much for defending the guy. There are some bad parts to Stockman's book that even I won't overlook. Egotism is one. Stockman tends to take any rejection of his policy advice as an affront to the gods. Reagan doesn't want a tax increase after what I've told him? Why, he must be some kind of nincompoop. Another problem is score settling. Using his book to make some political points is one thing. Using it to stick needles in his old foes in the Administration is another. Stockman is beside himself in his denunciations of Meese and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who bested him time after time in appeals to Reagan. He is obsessed with discrediting his supply-side allies. Sometimes the desire to go after his enemies gets the better of his egotism. Stockman zings columnist Robert Novak for writing in late 1980 that a movement was building behind Stockman's bid to be budget director. Actually, there was no movement at all, Stockman says, and Novak was only trying to get a job for a supply-sider, which Stockman was at the time. Wrong. Stockman was well known by then, and there was indeed a movement behind him, a strong one. Just ask Ronald Reagan.

Stockman flips out on the subject of Congressman Jack Kemp. At first, he describes Kemp as "an unusual politician—he read books and talked about them. . . . Kemp had a seriousness of mind and intellectuality of approach that made him stand out like a lighthouse in a sea of fog." That's on page 39, which describes Stockman's pre-White House days. But Kemp has the audacity to differ with Stockman on raising taxes. Suddenly, he's a blockhead, a nudnik, a betrayer of friends. Stockman accuses him of adhering to "a free lunch message and a mindless political addiction to tax cutting without regard to the fiscal consequences." That's on page 400. It wasn't Kemp who changed. Stockman once thought Kemp a Renaissance man. That was when they agreed on supply-side economics and nearly everything else. Now, he thinks Kemp is rigid and foolish. Translated, that means Stockman doesn't agree with Kemp anymore.

In the end, Stockman's most salient trait is frequent changes of mind. Sometimes the changes come with mindboggling speed. In the 1980 presidential race, he endorsed John Connally, voted for George Bush in the Michigan primary, and worked for Ronald Reagan in the fall campaign. Stockman just can't seem to find anything to hold his allegiance permanently. I started counting his conversions recounted in his book. By page 40, I'd counted five of them. And Stockman was still a congressman at the time. I stopped counting. □



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Gregory A. Fossedal and Gerald Hughes

MOON OVER THE POTOMAC

Washington's Other Paper comes into its own.

Like the kid who sees himself deftly catching a foul ball as the manager shouts, "Sign him up," editorial writers share a secret dream. According to *Time* magazine's Hugh Sidey, it actually happened last fall to someone at the *Washington Times*:

> The editorial in the *Washington Times* hit him hard on that Thursday morning. "Fish or Cut Bait, Mr. Reagan," read the headline. . . . "If Ronald Reagan again fails to avenge the death of a defenseless American, his constituents will want to know why they sent him back for a second term."
>
> Reagan brooded about it as he hurried through his morning briefing on the aftermath of the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*. Although U.S. intelligence had pinpointed the terrorists in Egypt, and a scheme was being hatched to try and capture them if they fled, they were still out of reach. . . .
>
> He strode onto his waiting helicopter. The editorial still rankled. . . . Did not the critics understand . . . that to kill innocent bystanders would cast him as a terrorist? What he wanted, and what he would wait for, Reagan said, was a "clean one," the chance to strike directly at the guilty.

As he dashed to a speech at a Sara Lee plant in Deerfield, Illinois, Mr. Reagan approved a plan to intercept some of the *Achille Lauro* pirates as they fled to Italy. About twenty-five minutes later, his orders were in the hands of F-14 fighter pilots on board a U.S. carrier in the Mediterranean. Mr. Reagan had his clean one. And the *Times*'s editorial-page editor William Cheshire, along with the staffer who drafted the editorial, had a journalistic home run.

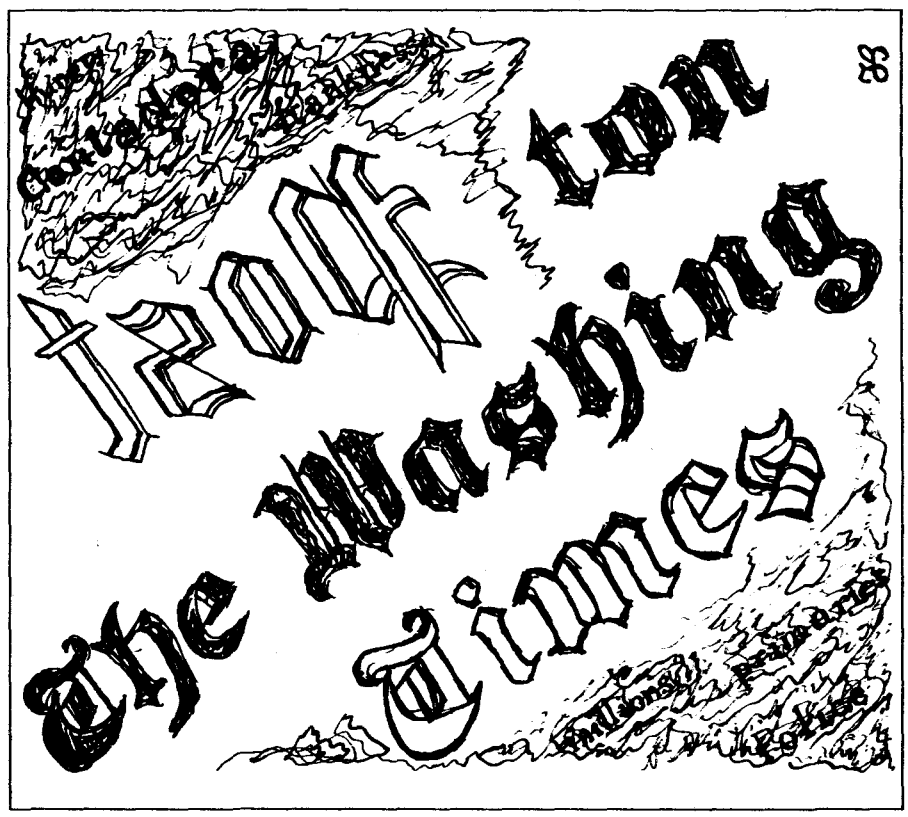
Such stories have been the blessing and the curse of the *Washington Times*. Yes, it is read by Ronald Reagan, a fact that of itself gives the paper significance. Standard wisdom, though, has it that the upstart *Times* (circulation: 83,000 a year ago, according to one audit, and about 100,000 according to the paper's weekly figures for April) isn't read by many people outside the narrow ideological cave of Reaganism. "By the usual standards of newspapers," wrote Ellen Hume of the *Wall Street Journal* last December, "the *Times* has been a conspicuous failure."

Miss Hume's observation may have been plausible last Christmas—though even the *New York Times* noted months before that "the paper has created a niche for itself in the capital's crowded journalistic marketplace." It would be clearly implausible today.

"I think it's an improving paper," says David Broder, political columnist and reporter for the *Washington Post*. "My overall impression is that the nucleus good staff they started with—many of the *Washington Star* people—has been supplemented, and the coverage is improving." Gary Hart, no enthusiast for the paper's Reaganite editorial policy, told a friend, "I'm mad at Arnaud de Borchgrave," the paper's flamboyant editor who co-wrote the best-selling novel *The Spike* after being spiked himself by *Newsweek* magazine. "He's created another paper that you have to read to keep up in Washington."

Nor is the paper's importance limited to political news junkies, people who, as an aide to Congressman Steve Solarz told a Republican counterpart recently, "have to read the *Times*," because "we have to keep track of what you guys are up to." Governmental news summaries, such as the Pentagon's widely read daily briefing, give testimony to the paper's influence, which is also echoed by television news and magazine editors. On April 24, ABC's "World News Tonight" reported that former White House aide Michael Deaver was still receiving a highly sensitive copy of Mr. Reagan's daily schedule. ABC didn't cite a source, but the news had just broken that morning in a *Times* story by George Archibald. "Our reporter probably didn't mention them because she checked the story out with her own sources," said ABC spokesman Elise Adde. "But I do know the *Washington Times* had the story. . . . They had it the first time it was reported."

"I don't know who their sources are, but they're getting a lot of stories no one else has," says Morton Kondracke, Washington bureau editor of *Newsweek*. "It's developed a niche," Kondracke says, not just as an alternative political point of view to the *Post*, but "as an information source." If someone who works in Washington tells you he doesn't read the *Times*, you might suspect a coverup. Last summer, *Post* political reporter Sidney Blumenthal gave one of us a brief tour of the *Post* newsroom. It was striking to see how many desks included a copy or two of the *Times*, easily identifiable by its sharp headlines, color photos, and ink that doesn't rub all over your fingers. "Yeah, some people here read it," Blumenthal said. "Nobody will admit it, though."



The reason lies in the paper's founding. First published in 1982, the *Washington Times* was started by several Korean businessmen who belong to the Unification Church run by the controversial Sun Myung Moon. But contrary to many reports, the paper is not "owned" or "run" by the church, or by Moon. Besides facing a moonie problem, though, the paper has suffered a leadership problem: three editors in its first three years, three editorial-page editors, and similar changeover in such top news positions as managing, executive, and national news editor. Perhaps the rockiest bump came in 1984, when editor and publisher James Whelan

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was fired by the paper's management. Whelan said he had refused to knuckle under to the moonies and was purged. Almost everyone else said, and still says, he had pressed outrageous salary and other compensation demands. "I'm sure the issue presented itself in his mind as a moonie thing," says *National Review* publisher William Rusher, a member of the paper's advisory board who remains a friend of Whelan. "But it just isn't so."

In its next phase the *Times* was piloted by Smith Hempstone, a longtime Washington newspaperman and former editorial editor of the defunct *Washington Star*. Hempstone had been Whelan's right hand, and chief recruiter of such former fixtures in the *Star*'s firmament as Anne Crutcher, editorial-page editor at the *Times* until her death in 1983, and Diana McClellan, the "Ear" on Washington society at the *Star*, then the *Post*, and then the *Times*. As editor, Hempstone sought to cast the *Times* along the lines of the old *Star*, covering essentially the same news as the *Post* but with more vigor, less bias.

Hempstone improved the paper's image as an impartial news organ. The problem, as one friend of Hempstone's put it, was that "if the *Star* gang couldn't make it without the moonie connection," folding in 1981 despite an attempted bailout by Time-Life Inc., "they certainly can't make it with the moonie connection." The paper was fair, and accurate, but had no focus, nothing you had to know and couldn't get from one of a dozen other dailies.

Nevertheless, during the Whelan-Hempstone years, the *Times* established itself as a decently balanced paper, an occasional breaker of news, and an influential editorial voice. The *Times* generally supported Ronald Reagan, but functioned not as a mouthpiece for the Administration, but as a gadfly, prompting the White House in a bolder, more assertive direction. In 1982, for example, more established publications such as *National Review* and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page wouldn't publish or cover arguments for a strategic defense shield against nuclear weapons. But the *Times* thumped away. Former National Security Adviser Richard Allen says the paper's steady advocacy of a strategic defense helped convince the President, in 1983, to act on his long-held instincts and launch research on a "star wars" shield.

If the paper merely provided some ideological balance to Washington, it would be a good thing. Yet, if people want to know the Reaganite view on Star Wars or tax reform or monetary policy, they needn't go further than *Human Events* or *National Review*. In 1985, the paper's managers, led by the moonie businessman Bo Hi Pak, decided a change was needed. Pak approached such figures as James Watt, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Lyn Nofziger, and Frank Shakespeare to see if one would become publisher or editor. All politely turned away the feelers, but eventually Pak went to a more logical choice—a zesty, competitive, muckraking journalist with several decades' experience in foreign reporting and a personal aversion to Communism, atheism, and The Washington Post Company: Arnaud de Borchgrave.

In little more than a year, de Borchgrave has taken the paper to new heights. Almost every day, the *Times* has something important you don't see elsewhere. The paper, *Washington Monthly* editor Charles Peters observes, "has been beating the *Post* consistently" at some important stories.

Gary Hart told a friend, "I'm mad at Arnaud de Borchgrave. He's created another paper that you have to read to keep up in Washington."

George Archibald's discovery that Michael Deaver was receiving a copy of the President's daily schedule is just one example. Archibald also broke the news, this spring, that the White House had attempted to stymie a report by the General Accounting Office on the acid rain controversy, another smoking gun with Deaver's fingerprints. Often, *Times* scoops are dismissed as simply being fed to the paper by a grateful Reagan Administration (as if no one leaking things to the *Washington Post* has an agenda). The Deaver case would indicate otherwise.

It's on foreign and defense news that the *Times* has particularly shined. Several important Soviet assaults in Afghanistan and Angola were first reported in its pages. "They've been way ahead on Afghanistan," Kondracke says. *Times* reporter Mark Tapscott, according to Peters, "has done some of the best reporting on the space shuttle disaster I've seen." For example, Tapscott wrote a story detailing a breakdown in communication at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in which warnings the shuttle might be headed for trouble somehow never reached the ears of top NASA bureaucrats.

Reporting like this has forced the *Post* to compete, at least grudgingly. Indeed, the improvement of the *Washington Post* may be one of the *Times*'s most important achievements. There have been other factors, of course. For one thing, the *New York Times*, the *Post*'s real competitor in terms of Washington influence, is becoming a great newspaper again. For another, Reagan has transformed the national agenda, compelling at least some changes in influential journals. It's no overstatement, though, to say the *Washington Times* has drawn the attention of the *Post*'s editors—sometimes expressed in vigorous terms.

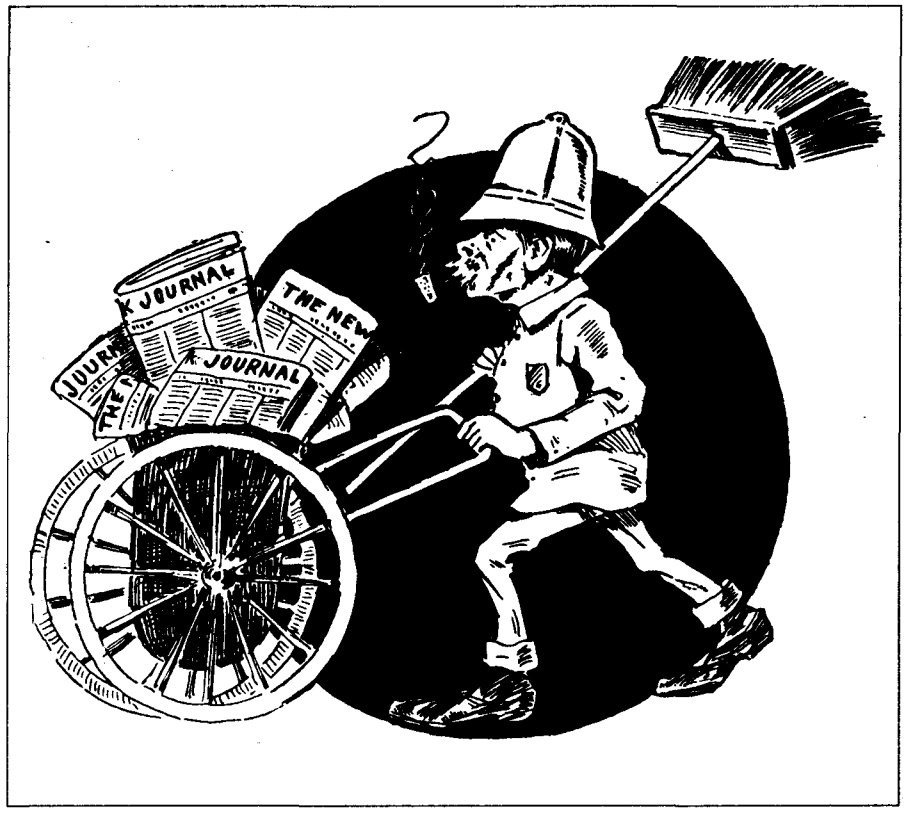
Early this year, for example, *Post* Metro editor Larry Kramer held a meeting in the news room to bawl out his staff for being beaten on such stories as the management woes of D.C. Mayor Marion Barry. At about the same time, City Council Chairman Dave Clark found himself at the home of *Post* executive editor Ben Bradlee, mentioning to a friend that the *Times* had been whipping the *Post* on city government. Bradlee overheard and took umbrage: swearing at Clark according to some, shouting according to others, and "getting pretty nasty," as one alleged witness put it, according to almost everyone. Bradlee told us he didn't swear, but when asked if the rest of the story was true, he grumbled and hung up the phone.

Bradlee's exchange with Clark, however, was probably an atavism. *Post* reporters say that, if anything, Bradlee has mellowed to the prospect of competing with his old rival de Borchgrave. The two chatted affably, for example, at this spring's White House correspondents' dinner. "Ben isn't so negative about the *Times*," one *Post* reporter said. "To the extent the *Times* has any impact, it makes it easier for him to do some things he wanted to do anyway."

Most *Post* staffers deny the *Times* has had any substantial impact on them. It's quite possible, though, that they simply aren't always aware of it, since the most important effects the *Times* has—giving government officials an alternative place to leak, stiffening Reagan's resolve, forcing certain stories onto the agenda—might easily be unseen by individual *Post* reporters and editors. Competition is an "invisible hand" because it's invisible, but it's still a hand. Bradlee doesn't even see the *Times*, according to some, does according to others. But the mere fact that people like Broder and Bradlee were willing to discuss the *Times* suggests it has had some effect on them.[1]

To show just one example of how the *Washington Times* has put a story on the national agenda, we did a careful study of several dozen clips taken from the two papers on just one story: the controversial odyssey of Miroslav Medvid, the Ukrainian sailor who last fall jumped off a Soviet ship in New

[1]Even Mary McGrory, a *bête noire* of Reaganites in Washington for her sharp attacks on the Administration written in a snappy Pat Buchanan prose style, says she sees the *Times*. "I look to see if they're saying anything about me," she says wryly, adding, accurately, that usually the *Times is* saying something about Mary McGrory. "I seem to be feeding a lot of mouths over there." A few days later McGrory called us back with this addition: "You know, I forgot to say that I read John McKelway there regularly. . . . I'm addicted."



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Orleans.[2] The *Times* was ahead of the *Post* in almost every relative measure of what became a top news story on the eve of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. Stories on Medvid, from the first days of the crisis, were displayed prominently on page one of the *Times*, while they were given scanty headlines and buried on pages 8A, 16A, and even the back of the foreign section in the *Post*.

The *Times* also devoted resources and energy to the story, sending a reporter, Rita McWilliams, down to New Orleans on the first day of Medvid's jump and letting her pursue the story for weeks, with help from more senior reporters such as Jeremiah O'Leary in Washington. Early stories in the *Post*, by contrast, weren't even done by *Post* reporters; the paper relied on copy from Associated Press and United Press International. When the paper did deign to assign one of its own the beat was handed around like an unwanted foster child, moving on successive days from Charles Fishman to John Goshko to Mary Thornton to Dale Russakoff to Kathy Sawyer to John Mintz to Loretta Tofani. Not until the crisis was more than a week old did one of these bylines appear twice.

As a result, *Times* stories were more critical, more thorough, and more insightful. Goshko, for example, twice filed long stories which simply reiterated the line coming from the State Department, and George Shultz himself, maintaining that a) Medvid had said he wanted to return to the ship, and b) in any case, all avenues of appeal, now that Medvid was back in Soviet hands, had been exhausted. Only in a sentence or two, out of more than forty inches of copy, did Goshko juxtapose these claims with those of critics who said otherwise. McWilliams, meanwhile, was digging up witnesses in New Orleans, including the owner of a jewelry store and various harbor patrol officers, who disputed Shultz's account.

Even if Medvid's case was indeed "closed," as a Goshko story clearly suggested midway through the crisis, only readers of the *Times* were kept up to date on the efforts of various Medvid sympathizers to offer him a final chance at freedom. The zenith of this effort was the week of November 4, when the *Times* had front-page stories every day on the various crusades. One, led by Senators Robert Dole, Gordon Humphrey, and Jesse Helms, sought to subpoena Medvid to testify before the Senate, while demanding action from the Justice Department to investigate State's bungling. The other took the form of lawsuits, filed on Medvid's behalf, by Ukrainian-American groups. With Medvid back on his ship, these efforts became the story itself, and were played prominently on nightly TV news broadcasts. Yet the *Post* continued dragging its feet, trying to ignore the story that the *Times* had claimed as its own. Even reporters at the Washington bureau of the *Wall Street Journal*, hardly enthusiasts for the *Washington Times*, snickered that the story was becoming an embarrassment to the *Post*.

Often, *Washington Times* scoops are dismissed as simply being fed to the paper by a grateful Reagan Administration. The Deaver case would indicate otherwise.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the *Times*'s coverage, though, involved not its aggressive digging for evidence that Medvid might have been cynically shuffled back in order to preserve the correct atmospherics for the Geneva summit, but the way McWilliams and others pursued leads that might cast doubt on this version too, that might suggest the State Department had not acted so irresponsibly. McWilliams, for example, managed to find the names of the two agents who first returned Medvid to his ship; days after she named them in a page one article, the *Post* still didn't seem to know who they were, saying the Justice Department had refused to disclose their names. Neither agent would talk with McWilliams at first, but eventually one, Ernest Spurlock, did. Spurlock staunchly claimed that he and his partner had asked Medvid several times if he wanted asylum, each time being told he did not. The interview, then, offered new if biased evidence that Medvid was not, in fact, railroaded to the gulag. Yet it was displayed on page one, just as boldly as McWilliams's other breaks in the Medvid affair.

Medvid is just one example of a broader dynamic. It's been hard to miss, for example, the general improvement on defense issues coming from such *Post* reporters as Fred Hiatt and Walter Pincus. Last summer, Hiatt published one of the first and earliest stories in the major press noting the growth of the Military-Congressional Complex, the spider web of bureaucracies and regulations that was built to minimize Pentagon waste but is now, arguably, a chief cause of it. Hiatt's article, though, came after some equally excellent reporting on the subject appeared in the *Washington Times*. Pincus, meanwhile, has begun to catch up with William Broad at the *New York Times*, several reporters at the *Washington Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page, in reporting advances made in Star Wars research. Like Broad, Pincus retains his anti-defense bias; his dispatches pooh-pooh or ignore the real arguments for Star Wars, and use advances by one Star Wars scientist to set off fights among others. Still, *Post* readers are getting information they didn't get previously.

At times, it should be noted, the *Times*'s appetite for the scoop backfires. In 1983, Jeremiah O'Leary reported on page one that President Reagan had "already decided" not to reappoint Fed Chairman Paul Volcker when his term expired that summer. That's just what Reagan did, though, a few months after O'Leary's story. During the raid this year on Libya, a front-page *Times* story said high intelligence officials told the paper Qaddafi had fled the country. Evidently that's what the triumphalist Reagan Administration thought, but the seasoned de Borchgrave should have played the piece more skeptically. But at least both stories were carefully qualified. Then too, taking gambles is what you're supposed to do when you're an underdog. And who ever said the larger, more established *Post* doesn't make mistakes?

If the *Times* can match and improve on the standard it set for itself with Medvid, it should have a bright future. Even the paper's friends, though, say it sometimes strays. Shortly after becoming editor, de Borchgrave announced the paper would offer $1 million for information leading to the arrest, trial, and conviction of Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele. Last year he launched a fund in the paper's name to raise $14 million in aid for the contras in Nicaragua. The moves were bold and flamboyant, and it's hard to oppose support for the contras. But it isn't the kind of thing you expect from a newspaper. The *Times* will have more impact, even in helping Nicaraguan freedom fighters, if it sticks to reporting on fund-raising efforts rather than organizing them.

Then again, as Morton Kondracke observes, "the paper's ideology is one of its strengths. . . . It tells them where to look for things, what's important. But they need to tone it down a little in the writing, and to do some reporting on things that might not seem as important to them." So far, says Chris Matthews of Tip O'Neill's staff, "they've balanced pretty well" the tradeoff between being too bland (the *Washington Star*) and too ideological (the present *Washington Times*, on occasion).

One way the *Times* fights back is to be out in front on stories of interest to Democrats. For example, the paper has given superior coverage to various rising-star Democratic governors around the country. And such political reporters as Tapscott and Ralph Hallow have tracked more carefully than their *Post* counterparts the positioning of various 1988 candidates. Hallow did a quick but complete page-one story on Gary Hart when the news broke that Hart enjoys a 100-proof rating from Americans for Democratic Action, a sign that Hart's neoliberalism may be moving off the spectrum.

The paper's other problem is less tractable: the moonie connection, which exacerbates the already large problems one faces starting up a major metropolitan newspaper. It's now clear The Connection is here to stay. At various times, rumor has it, beer magnate Joseph Coors, Australian newspaperman Rupert Murdoch, and others have made offers to buy the *Times* for a token sum. *Times* public affairs officer Larry Chandler won't confirm or deny who the bids came from, but says "there have been offers." All were turned away. Thus, while the moonies seem to have no interest in interfering with day-to-day running of the paper—for example, any news on Moon himself is generally taken from the wire services—it's equally clear that they have a purpose more ambitious than simply starting up an alternative newspaper.

That purpose, the paper's top editors concede, is to build respectability for the Unification Church. And if that's the goal, Moon is succeeding. When the Korean preacher made his triumphant return home this year, he was accompanied by de Borchgrave himself, whom Moon referred to as "my editor." De Borchgrave also signed a front-page editorial defending Moon from tax-evasion charges and suggesting a Reagan pardon.

All of these actions are defensible. Many people with no connection to the *Washington Times* or the Unification Church felt Moon was treated unfairly. But an editor concerned with demonstrating his independence from a controversial owner probably wouldn't do the things de Borchgrave has done; he would have done backflips, as ex-editor Whelan did, to avoid even the appearance that Moon had succeeded in buying sympathy. The point is, for

[2]A more detailed comparison is made in a paper by Mr. Hughes, "The Medvid Jump: A Comparison of Coverage in the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Times*," available from the Alexis de Tocqueville Institution, Menlo Park, California.

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good or ill, the wall dividing the *Times* from the church is lower than it once was.

"If they want respectability," says editorial-page editor Cheshire, "I say they deserve it. I don't see any conservatives willing to put up that kind of money for a daily newspaper."

Happily for the *Washington Times*, the things most people read newspapers for have little to do with the religion of some of the editors. In fact, they have little to do with who gets "more scoops," though these build the paper's standing among elites. Most people buy newspapers to read about things like the mighty Boston Celtics—and the sports section of the *Times* ranks among AP's Top 10. They buy papers to read about movies, arts, fashion, and the *Times* has recruited some of the best writers around: culturologists Richard Grenier and John Podhoretz, media critic Don Kowet, arts critic Jane Addams Allen, featurist Diana West, and gag writer S. J. Masty. "Lots of people I know," says Matthews, "read the paper just for the arts and sports."

People also buy newspapers to read and clip the ads. Unfortunately, advertisers, in turn, place ads based on a paper's circulation. The *Times* is thin on both. It's difficult for any new paper to escape this vicious circle, but the *Times* is making workmanlike progress. Circulation is rising by several hundred readers a week. Revenues are up by 51 percent in 1986 over 1985 levels, though from such a tiny base it's hard to call this rise significant. The paper still requires an annual subsidy of more than $30 million. There are in fact whispers that Moon's backers may slash the paper's budget and concentrate on the company's weekly magazine, *Insight*, which as a national publication wouldn't have to overcome the entrenched local advertising monopoly faced by the *Times*.

Editors at the *Times* that we talked to exude a quiet confidence. "We'll keep writing good copy, covering things the others won't, doing the good analysis and reporting," says executive editor Woody West. "That's how you build a newspaper." De Borchgrave seems to relish the competition, yet the paper on the other side of town isn't an obsession. "We're not some sort of reactor to the *Post*," he says. "We're a newspaper."

Nor does the prospect of having its most influential reader leave his home on Pennsylvania Avenue, come 1989, seem to trouble de Borchgrave's guerrillas. "We have sources, whoever is in," says West. "And actually, despite the talk, we just don't get that many leaks from the Administration." One could argue the paper would do better during a Democratic regime, or a centrist Republican one. The best muckraking is generally done by the opposition, from the *Post*'s coverage of Watergate to William Safire's chronicling of the confusions of Jimmy Carter. "All great newspapers," Mencken writes, "are ceaselessly querulous and bellicose. Forced to defend something, they will accomplish the task by turning around and attacking something else." The *Times* has become a fun paper under Ronald Reagan. But it might be more fun once it gets a shot at George Bush, Bill Bradley, Gary Hart, or Jack Kemp. □

William Tucker

MOSCOW ON THE HUDSON

What would Mia Farrow do without rent control?

Elzie Robinson is an 85-year-old former janitor who owns four buildings in Harlem. A big, robust man, painfully slowed by age, he still spends all day every day tending his eighty-four apartments.

On March 3, 1986, New York City Housing Court Judge Lewis Friedman threw him in jail for twenty days for not providing adequate heat and hot water for people in his buildings. The "tenants" were actually squatters who moved into one of his buildings last December after it was damaged by fire. Judge Friedman told Robinson, who is black, that it made no difference—as long as people were in his building he was obligated to provide them with services.

I stumbled onto Elzie Robinson's story last March while attending a meeting of the Harlem Taxpayers and Property Owners' Association in the recreation room of the Abyssinia Baptist Church, Adam Clayton Powell's old ministry. I was gathering stories for a book I am writing on New York rent control. The story seemed to epitomize the brutal warfare that New York City is currently carrying out against private landlords. Putting everything aside for a week, I tried to rush the story into print. Speaking in favor of landlords in New York, of course, is like speaking on behalf of polio. But here was a story, I thought, that would finally show people the fruitless savagery of New York City's housing policies.

I was wrong. The *New York Times Magazine*, the *Daily News* Sunday magazine, *New York* magazine, and Long Island's *Newsday* have all turned it down. The editor at the *Times* called the story too "parochial" and said he thought he remembered hearing New York's 43-year-old rent-control issue had been "settled." (The *Times* only pretends to live in New York.) The *News* editor said she had been instructed to concentrate on "movie-star stuff." The other magazines said it "wasn't quite right for them."

Soon I was having nightmares that Robinson would die in jail before I could tell anyone about it. At this writing, however, he is alive and well, and you, dear *Spectator* readers, are the first to read the story.

Rent control in New York is a "temporary" measure first imposed during World War II and never lifted. Naturally, it has produced the nation's worst housing shortage. While cities like Philadelphia and Chicago deal with normal housing vacancy rates of 6-9 percent, New York's stands at 2 percent and is estimated at *minus* 2 percent in mid-Manhattan (meaning that 2 percent is living in illegal housing). Finding a decent apartment in New York involves the kind of clandestine dealings that most people identify with the Soviet economy. A close friend of mine recently "acquired" an Upper West Side apartment by paying $7,000 in "key money" to the previous *tenant*. On Park Avenue the price can go as high as $100,000.

This East European flavor has become so commonplace in the nation's cultural capital that it is difficult to convince the average New Yorker that the "housing crisis" is not a national phenomenon. The statistics, however, tell a different story. While vacancy rates in Dallas and Houston approach 15-20 percent, New York has lost 300,000 units to abandonment over the past ten years—some of them in the most beautiful and durable housing ever built in America. Private developers no longer even think of building rentals in New York. While private enterprise constructed 100,000 units in 1926 and 40,000 in 1940, no more than 10,000 units per year have been built since 1976. Many Fortune 500 companies have left New York, stating that they can no longer find housing for transferred or new employees.

You'd think that this spectacular failure of municipal socialism would bring cries of outrage and a revolution for the free market. But no, things don't work that way. The difficulty is that while rent control produces losers, it also creates winners. Most of these tend to be concentrated among the upper classes. The "best deals" in New York are found on the Upper East and West Sides and in Greenwich Village, the centers of "old wealth" and glit-

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terati. While newcomers to Manhattan are paying $1,000 for a dreary studio and $1,500 for a one-bedroom apartment with a view of a brick wall, people like Mia Farrow and State Senate minority leader Manfred Ohrenstein, an outspoken supporter of rent control, pay less than $1,800 for ten rooms overlooking Central Park. Alistair Cooke, William Shawn, editor of the *New Yorker*, and Whitney Ellsworth, publisher of the *New York Review of Books*, all live in rent-controlled apartments. Mayor Koch himself has a great deal, paying only $351.60 for a large Greenwich Village one-bedroom that could easily rent for $1,500.

As a result, a broad swathe of New York's educated, upper-middle class has risen to levels of remarkable affluence without ever having to pay its own way. Many of these elites sincerely believe that the exploitation of their own landlords somehow benefits the poor. Together they form a tremendously powerful constituency for maintaining rent control—and making sure it never gets discussed rationally.

Meanwhile, large builders are bailing out left and right. Harry Helmsley, the city's largest private owner, is currently liquidating his stock. He says he can no longer deal with rent regulations. (Helmsley owned 3 percent of the market. The city itself owns 15 percent and the figure is still climbing.) Sam LeFrak, who built 30,000 units of middle-income housing, has decamped to Jersey City. Others have simply closed up shop.

As a result, property ownership is falling into the hands of ever-more pathetic marginal investors. New immigrants, particularly East Europeans, form a significant part of the new ownership. (They are the only people who can be gulled into believing that free enterprise still exists in New York housing.) Most of New York is now owned by small landlords. Almost 80 percent own only one building and 45 percent own less than ten units.

At a recent housing-code hearing I did a brief interview with a neatly dressed law student who had just spoken in favor of rent controls. Only moments before, a hysterical small owner had screamed at officials: "My parents walked away from a building in Warsaw in 1945 because the Communists drove them out and now the same thing is happening here."

Mayor Koch himself has a great deal, paying only $351.60 for a large Greenwich Village one-bedroom that could easily rent for $1,500.

What did he think of the debate? I asked the law student.

"The trouble is the big guys never show up," he said. "All you see is these refugees from the 'captive nations' trying to eke out a middle-class living from one small building."

"What should be done with such people?" I asked in a way that probably didn't hide my annoyance.

"Well, I suppose they have a perfect right to try to scruff out a petit-bourgeois existence," he said. "It's just that it injects such an element of global politics into New York housing."

This is the atmosphere which landed Elzie Robinson in jail.

New York City's Housing Court was established in 1972 in order to "resolve disputes between landlords and tenants." In the "Outer Boroughs"—Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island—it probably functions as well as any system can that is inherently designed to exploit landlords. In the politically supercharged precincts of Manhattan, however, the anti-landlord bias is palpable. Judge Jay Stuart Dankberg, universally regarded as the most blatantly pro-tenant of Manhattan's nine judges, occupies a rent-controlled apartment near fashionable Gramercy Park. He pays $93.54 for a two-bedroom apartment. When he was appointed to housing court in 1981, he had been on his own personal rent strike for six years. His complaints were "the floorboards squeaked, the sink didn't drain right, and there were vermin in the apartment."

I spent several days in housing court over the past few months, following the Robinson case and interviewing tenants and landlords. After only a few hours it is easy to get the layout. The worst-dressed people are usually the landlords. Often they don't speak English very well. A little better dressed—but certainly not sartorially splendid—are the tenants. The people in suits and ties are the attorneys. They're the ones who make money out of the system.

Like all defendants, Robinson and his wife Dorothy, who is co-owner, had to answer a 10:30 a.m. calendar call to remain on the docket. The rest of the day was spent waiting to be called. Robinson served ten days of his sentence in March. Then his attorney, Ralph Accoo, was able to win a stay. Robinson was now making another appearance before Judge Friedman, always under the threat of being sent back to jail.

Accoo is a tall black man with a thin mustache and natty attire. He hadn't seemed too persuasive in the courtroom when I listened to the tapes of the March 3 trial. In person, though, he was more impressive. "Your big mistake was letting any of your tenants stay in the building at all," he told Robinson. "You should have kicked them all out. Once you conform with one regulation, you have to conform with them all."

The Robinsons had acquired their buildings from his late employer, a Harlem landlord, whose family was liquidating the estate. Robinson and his wife had saved $90,000 over their lifetime and put it all into the buildings. The money disappeared in five years and they are now broke.

When the fire partially destroyed one building in December they told eight long-term tenants they could stay rent-free in the unburnt portion of the building if they provided their own electric heaters. The boiler had been destroyed. Two of these tenants actually came to the trial and testified on Robinson's behalf, saying there had been adequate heat and hot water before the fire. They were savaged by the young attorney for the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), who charged they were not qualified to say what constituted "adequate" services. HPD, a vast, sprawling bureaucracy, funds organizations that sponsor rent strikes, takes over buildings for back taxes, and represents the tenants in housing court.

While the Robinsons were waiting to be called, they introduced me to another black Harlem landlord who they said had a story almost as bad as theirs. He was Jerry Oxford, a small, wiry mechanical engineer, about 45, with a threadbare tweed jacket and light-brown eyes. "They've been trying to put me in jail for four years now," he said. "But I know an owner who's had it worse. He went to jail for six months."

What sets Oxford at odds with New York is his profession—fixing up old buildings. He said he is constantly hounded by HPD, which seems to see small owners as its prime competitors for the city's real estate. "I swear if I were out dealing drugs on a street-corner the city would pay me less attention," he said. "They go after me for everything I do."

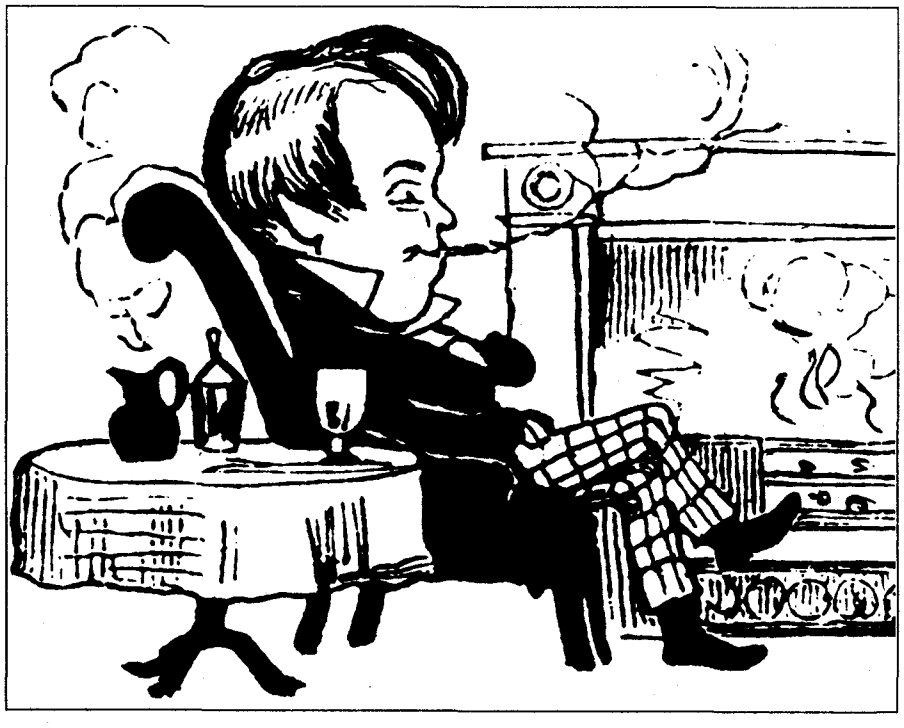
He began in his home neighborhood in Queens, buying up small, dilapidated buildings, rehabilitating them, and selling them to new owners, often arranging mortgages and paying the closing costs himself. Then he moved to Harlem, where his troubles began. One building he bought was already "owned" by the Columbia Tenants' Union, a collection of old sixties radicals who specialize in rent strikes. (They reportedly charge 40-60 percent of the withheld rent as a fee.) He never saw the inside of the building.

Everywhere else HPD hammered away at him, dragging him into court for trivial code violations, supporting tenants who refused to pay rent, and spreading the word he was a "speculator." "Finally, one of the housing court judges, Judge Harriet George, came up to my building to see for herself. She saw it wasn't a slum and told HPD to lay off. Since then I haven't had quite as much trouble." He has managed to hang on to four buildings, but has lost eight.

Trying to get both sides of the issue, I started looking for tenants. One gray-haired woman said something about tenants and I followed her down the hall. She had bright-pink cheeks and a coat that lifted her about a step-and-a-half above a bag-lady.

"Are you a tenant?" I asked.

"Yes, but I can't tell you my name."



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"I don't care, I just want to hear your story. Are you here against your landlord?"

"No, we're here against the city. We're supporting the landlord."

Her building was being taken over by the city for back taxes. The landlord was fighting it. HPD, which administers these foreclosures, had already started moving in some of the city's homeless population.

"They've filled the building with drug addicts and prostitutes," the woman told me. "It's terrible. I'm afraid for my life."

She finally told me her name was Catherine but said she didn't have a telephone. "I'll call you tonight from a pay phone," she said. "I can't say anymore now." She called me twice, but I missed her both times. She told my wife she was still afraid for her life. I haven't heard from her since.

Another group of tenants was knotted in the halls. Their attorney, a tall, well-dressed woman in her thirties, was earnestly giving them advice.

"We're bringing harassment charges against our landlord," a middle-aged man told me. "He's trying to drive us out of the building."

They lived on the Upper East Side. The landlord was converting several apartments to professional uses, trying to escape from rent regulations altogether. (Commercial and professional spaces are not regulated in New York, but there is constant agitation that they should be.) The five tenants I was interviewing were the last in the building. They were bringing a legal challenge to halt the conversions, and at the same time angling for "buy-outs" from the landlord. (Payments for this "legal bribery" often run from ten to twenty thousand dollars. Tenants who have held out against block-sized developments have received payments as high as a half million dollars.)

"They're not paying any rent anymore, either," the lawyer told me. "They never see the landlord, but they're told to send the check to one of those Lower East Side synagogues. It's all very shady." She gave me a knowing look.

What was shady about that?

"Don't you read the papers?" she said incredulously. "The FBI just charged one of those Lower East Side synagogues with laundering money for organized crime!"

I said I hadn't read anything about it. (I did see an article a week later.) But what difference did that make? Why would anyone have to launder rent money? It wasn't their synagogue that had been accused by the FBI, was it?

"Oh, it's too complicated to explain to you now."

A vast number of New York tenants, I have found, are morally certain that their landlord has "great connections," or is part of some mysterious political cabal. All this is used to justify the tenants' own machinations in avoiding rent.

The next person I met was another Harlem landlord named Mary Peterson. She was black, about 45, dressed in tight-fitting jeans and stiletto heels. Her eyeglasses were thick as coke bottles. Her hair was drawn back severely and her eyebrows were penciled blue. "I own a brownstone in Harlem," she said. "I've been there about ten years. I'm the only one left on my block. Every other building is in the hands of the city. They've driven out every landlord around." (Over 70 percent of Harlem is now owned by HPD.)

"My parents walked away from a building in Warsaw in 1945 because the Communists drove them out, and now the same thing is happening here."

"What's the problem?" I asked her.

"Rents. They don't pay you nothing. Four of my tenants pay me less than a hundred dollars. Yet I'm supposed to supply them with heat, hot water, pay insurance, you name it. And then half of them don't pay anyway. You come down to court here and try to collect and they don't do nothing for you. The tenants don't show up and the judges just postpone the case." (If landlords don't show up in housing court, the case is almost always dismissed in favor of the tenants; if the tenant doesn't show, the case is postponed.)

How close was she to losing her building?

"Any day. I ain't got no money left. They've cleaned me out. I've lost almost $100,000 in the last ten years. I worked full time just to support the building and I still couldn't make it. Every time you come down here the city attorneys are there supporting the tenants. If it's not HPD, it's legal aid. If a tenant doesn't pay rent for a year—for five years—they still won't kick them out. I'm supposed to support them. So what's going to happen if I lose my building? Who's going to take care of me?"

I didn't have any answers. I started talking to another woman whom I had heard respond as the tenant in another case. She was about 30, rather nicely dressed in an African motif. What was she doing down here? I asked.

"Oh, HPD asked me to come down and testify against my Jew landlord," she said. "They're trying to get him out of the building and they want me to say some things against him." She told me her last name was Shabazz, but wouldn't give her first name. She lived in East Harlem and paid $281 a month for six rooms. "It's cheap. I love the apartment. But the damned landlord won't fix a thing. We're not poor people, you know. My husband and I make $30,000 a year."

Why did she stay in the apartment then? For $30,000 a year she could probably afford a co-op, or move to New Jersey, couldn't she?

"Well, we talked about it. But when you buy a co-op, you've got to talk to banks and they want to look at your income and all that."

What was the problem there?

"We don't pay taxes, you see? We're street vendors. So if we bought a place and had to start dealing with the government it would cost us too much money."

Mary Peterson, who had been listening nearby, finally strolled over and joined the conversation.

"You know, I heard you say something just a minute ago," she said. "I heard you say your landlord was a Jew. Well let me ask you something. How do you know he isn't fronting for a Chinese? Or an Arab?"

Shabazz, knowing she was being called down, didn't flinch. "Well, I just said it, that's all," she shot back. "We had a Jew lady in there who owned the building, and then she sold it to a Jew man. And that's what happened."

"Well, what difference does it make? Why bring it up in the first place?"

Shabazz was about to answer, but the bailiff called her case. She disappeared into the courtroom, where the City of New York would be using her testimony to put more people like Mrs. Peterson out of business.

Finally, about 4:30, the Robinsons were summoned. The HPD attorney, Carol Steinberg, moved easily behind the bar, laughing and joking with Judge Friedman. Wearing a powder-blue suit with matching pearl earrings and necklace, she was easily the most elegant woman in the courtroom.

It was brief. After a few minutes Steinberg and Friedman concluded that Robinson was making a diligent enough effort to remedy the situation and the case could be continued until June. "Come in prepared to show that you are either going to repair the building or sell it," said Judge Friedman.

As I stood outside later talking with the Robinsons and Accoo, Steinberg came rushing down the hall and ran straight into the group. I had introduced myself to her before and she now realized that I was covering the Robinsons' case.

"Have you applied for a city loan?" she cheerfully asked Elzie.

He said he had already been turned down.

"Well, keep trying. The city wants to help you, you know."

Finally her curiosity overcame her. "How did you happen to acquire the building in the first place?" she asked, in the way you might ask someone how he happened to break an arm or a leg.

"Show her your hands, Elzie," said Accoo, who was standing next to him. Robinson raised his hands. They were swollen and arthritic. Every third fingernail was a gnarled lump of discolored tissue. Steinberg smiled bravely.

"That's how he got the building," said Accoo. "With those hands—twenty-five years." □

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Joshua Muravchik

TERROR IN THE TOWNSHIPS: A SOUTH AFRICA UPDATE

And the wife of the mayor of Cape Town has just been chosen South Africa's best-dressed woman.

I have always tried to ignore South Africa. At a glance it seemed a bad situation more likely to worsen than to improve. Apartheid is evil, but that is easier to know than to know how to assure that it is replaced with something better. Even saying that, though, makes one appear to have some patience for the evil. Therein lies a trap for the politically unwary that I have preferred to avoid.

So when curiosity impelled me to accept an invitation to travel there on a study mission of American Jewish intellectuals sponsored by the South Africa Foundation and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, I went bearing more than my fair quota of ignorance, or, to put the best face on it, ready to view the situation with fresh eyes.

Although apartheid means "apartness," the first thing that struck me as we entered Johannesburg was that the blacks are not apart at all. Nine out of ten people on the streets, it seemed, were black, as were some of the customers and most of the people working in hotels and restaurants. More important than the fact that they are not "apart" physically, these urban blacks are not very much apart culturally, either. They seem to be influenced as much by New York (or Hollywood) as by the bush whence their forebears came. Their dress and manner is Western, their language is English, and their favorite television program is "The Cosby Show."

This makes it hard to believe that their aspirations and sensibilities are that different from our own, hard to comfort oneself by imagining that they can bear with indifference the status of conquered nations serving their conquerors. Of course they are not enslaved; they are drawn to work for whites by economic incentives, as are "guest workers" from other African states. Yet some of the customs of the serving trades bespeak a tradition of servility.

When a waiter in South Africa brings you something, you do not thank him, he thanks you. A guidebook given incoming tourists aboard South Africa Airlines explains that tipping in South Africa is neither as common nor as generous as in the United States. Those who feel compelled to tip are urged to keep it below 10 percent. On a street in Johannesburg, I watched an old black streetsweeper push a garbage can on wheels along the curb. I call him a streetsweeper, but he had no broom, only gloves. He shuffled along, bent almost perpendicular at the waist, pushing his can with one outstretched arm while picking up trash with his other hand.

When their shifts are done, the streetsweeper and the waiter and the bellman and the concierge all must leave the city to sleep within what are quaintly called their "townships." These are densely packed shanty towns, located at safe distance from where white people live. The most famous of these is Soweto, and that's where we were taken our first morning in South Africa.

We did not venture very deep into Soweto, but kept mostly to the more affluent areas where some of the small cottages were surrounded by carefully tended flower beds. We drove briefly through some distinctly poorer areas, rows of shacks made largely of corrugated metal, but these, we were told, were by Sowetan standards middle class.

We drove past some long, rectangular buildings, two or three stories high, surrounded by tall chain-link fences. The austere institutional design made me wonder at first if they were a prison or large police station. But no, they were workers' barracks—symbol of one of the most pernicious features of apartheid.

The theory of the system held that whites and blacks were too culturally disparate to form a single polity. The land would have to be partitioned. Whites, who made up 15 percent of the population, would get 80 percent of the land. "Blacks" of various shades would get the rest in the form of tribal homelands. Blacks could work in white areas, but not live there. Where would a black man sleep while he worked in a white area hundreds of kilometers from his "homeland"? In a men-only barracks in a black township within commuting distance of the white area. Only after ten years in the barracks did he become eligible to rent a cottage or shack within the black township, and only after that were his wife and children allowed to leave the "homeland" and join him in the township. As one contemplates the pathology now plentifully in evidence in the townships, it is hard to fathom the stupidity of a system that created this vast urban underclass while deliberately sundering the bonds of family within it.

Some in our group wanted to go deeper into Soweto, but our black driver refused. "You go in there, you don't come out," he said. He must have been at least as concerned about his own safety as about ours. Black violence in the townships has for the most part targeted blacks. The targets are those deemed collaborators—policemen and township officials, but others as well. During our stay a 16-year-old girl was burned to death, apparently for having ignored a school boycott.

Not only the choice of victims, but also the methods of violence are often grotesque. The favored form of killing is to place a gasoline-filled tire around the victim's neck and ignite it. Sometimes the victim is stoned as well. There are lesser punishments for lesser infractions. A township resident caught coming home with groceries from a white-owned store may be forced to eat

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the raw meat on the spot or drink down the cooking oil.

The violence is carried out mostly by teenagers. Groups of them have designated themselves "the young comrades," but it is not clear whether they have much formal organization or much that could be called political opinions, nor whether they receive direct leadership from *Umkhonto we Siswe* (Spear of the People), the clandestine cell network of the African National Congress (ANC).

To encourage violence, the ANC has taken up the slogan, "Make the townships ungovernable." This has apparently been accomplished. The police or army can enter in force to break up demonstrations or riots, but except for such displays of muscle the townships seem largely lawless. Surprisingly, the police force in South Africa is much smaller proportionally than in most parts of the United States. Perhaps as a result, it relies heavily for crowd control on the use of severe and often deadly force. We heard many complaints that the police themselves often act without civilian control, thus adding to the general climate of lawlessness.

Orchestrated or not, the violence works brilliantly to exploit a critical vulnerability of the apartheid system. Everywhere we went, nervous whites told us of the hopes they place in "black moderates," but no urban black can afford to be moderate as long as he must live, as all are compelled to do, in the townships under the reign of the "young comrades."

The sadistic, nihilistic practices of these teenagers, tethered loosely to vague Communist rhetoric, made me fear for what might happen if a revolutionary movement triumphed in South Africa with them as its shock troops. An alternative scenario suggested by one savvy South African was that the Communists in the ANC, if they achieved power, would no longer have use for youngsters grown accustomed to being a law unto themselves, and would have no scruples about liquidating the lot of them in order to build the new society from more malleable human material.

The ANC is an illegal organization, and has no structure in South Africa, except *Umkhonto we Siswe*. But despite its lack of overt organization, and despite its traditional base in the Xhosa nation, just one of several main tribal groups, the ANC has captured the imagination of most South African blacks as the symbol of their resistance to the system that oppresses them. I met several black professionals who ought to have been prototypical "moderates," yet each professed his support for the ANC. One who worked for a quasi-governmental agency said: "Either you support the ANC or you condone killing children"—a reference to the numerous deaths of adolescent demonstrators at the hands of police.

A former intelligence officer in the South African security forces told us that nineteen of the thirty members of the ANC's executive committee, including all five of its white members, are Communist party members, although others say as few as twelve belong to the party. *Umkhonto*, which embraces both a clandestine cell network within the country and several thousand fighters at training bases outside it, is in practice a joint enterprise of the ANC and the South African Communist party. Its chief of staff is Joe Slovo, the white Communist boss who is reputed, the editor of a white liberal paper told me, to be a colonel in the KGB.

As one contemplates the pathology now plentifully in evidence in the townships, it is hard to fathom the stupidity of a system that created a vast urban underclass while deliberately sundering the bonds of family within it.

The obvious irony is that should the ANC triumph the real rulers of South Africa might once again be white. The South African Communist party has worked hard to make itself a majority black organization. But the former intelligence officer estimated that half the members of its politburo are white and only 20 percent black, the others being "colored" or Indian.

Forty years ago, I was told, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, now the president of the ANC, sponsored a resolution that would have barred Communists from membership in it. An intriguing question is whether at some point in the hastening evolution of South African politics some of the non-Communists in the ANC could break off from the Communists. There would be some precedent for this. In 1959, a group broke away from the ANC and formed the Pan African Congress (PAC), with an ideology more racial than that of the ANC. The PAC is associated with the "black consciousness" movement, whose leading advocate, Steve Biko, died in police custody in 1977.

The principal legal organization of the black consciousness movement is called Azapo, short for the Azanian People's Movement. We met with the head of Azapo, an intense young intellectual named Seths Cooper. Tall, thin, bearded, brown-skinned, with non-negroid features, Cooper spent a large part of the 1970s in prison for his revolutionary views. Asked to distinguish the stand of his group from that of the ANC, Cooper referred to the ANC's pro-Soviet alignment and said that his group opposes "Stalinism" and "any ideology that excludes democracy." He did not refer to his own racial status until asked, although it was not obvious from looking at him. "I am registered as an Indian," he replied.

That an Indian could be head of the black consciousness movement is not as odd as it sounds. In South Africa, "black" is used to designate what are officially three racial groups: Indians, "coloreds" (those of mixed blood), and black Africans, who are called merely "Africans." Notwithstanding these semantics, the experience of Indians in other African states raises questions about how far the "blackness" of South Africa's Indians will go. During our visit, consumer boycotts in some areas were specifically targeting Indian merchants as well as white.

Despite the way the system undermines urban black moderates, there is one "moderate" force that plays an important part in the black political picture: Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, chief minister of KwaZulu, the largest of South Africa's autonomous tribal regions. Buthelezi favors a negotiated transition to majority rule, opposes violent revolution and "disinvestment," and advocates a capitalist and democratic future for South Africa in some kind of federal system designed to allay white fears. Before we flew to KwaZulu to meet Buthelezi, I suspected that his opponents' characterization of him as an Uncle Tom might be accurate. I imagined a traditional tribal leader of people not yet fully in the grip of the revolution of rising expectations, easily manipulated by whites. This was all wrong. The Zulus form the largest ethnic group in South Africa, and were once the most powerful. Buthelezi is a hereditary chief of one of the many clans that make up the Zulu nation, but he is not the hereditary leader of the nation, or the king, which is now a purely ceremonial role. The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly elected Buthelezi as its head. Of the 6 to 7 million Zulus, about half live in KwaZulu where Buthelezi's supremacy seems unquestioned. The other half, whose loyalties are less certain, are dispersed among the nation's urban areas.

Buthelezi, himself once a leader of the ANC, is neither an Uncle Tom nor a political naif. He may have done more than anyone else to foil the master plan of apartheid when he refused to allow KwaZulu to make the transition from an autonomous region to an independent state like Transkei and Bophuthatswana. The difference, in short, between Buthelezi and more radical black leaders is not that he is less sensitive than they to present injustices, but that he is more wary of future dangers.

Buthelezi is at this moment the key figure in an experiment which if successful may have important ramifications. KwaZulu is located in Natal, one

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of South Africa's four provinces and the home of the big bulk of South Africa's Indians. Its white population is predominantly English, not Afrikaner, making it relatively liberal. A kind of constitutional convention—called by the Zulu word, *Indaba*—is now in progress, the aim of which is to create a single multi-racial political system for all Natal. Natal might be the easiest place to take such a leap, but if the plan works it could be a model for the rest of the country. During our visit, on the eve of the Indaba, simultaneous firebomb attacks destroyed the home and the office of a Buthelezi adviser who is one of the intellectual architects of the Indaba. Although the attack could conceivably have come either from the left or the right, Buthelezi later pointed an accusing finger at the ANC.

White South Africa is a democracy, but its political dynamics strike an American as unfamiliar. And not only because there are infringements of democracy. Civilian control of the military and security services is uncertain; power has flowed away from the legislature into the hands of a small executive body, the Counsel of State; and the press is censored. But what is odder about South African democracy is the striking lack of integration of the white polity. There is apparently little social friction between the English- and Afrikaans-speaking communities, but politically they seem worlds apart. The English speakers, who constitute 40 percent of the white populace, and who are economically rooted in the private sector, array themselves along a spectrum of political opinion not that different from our own.

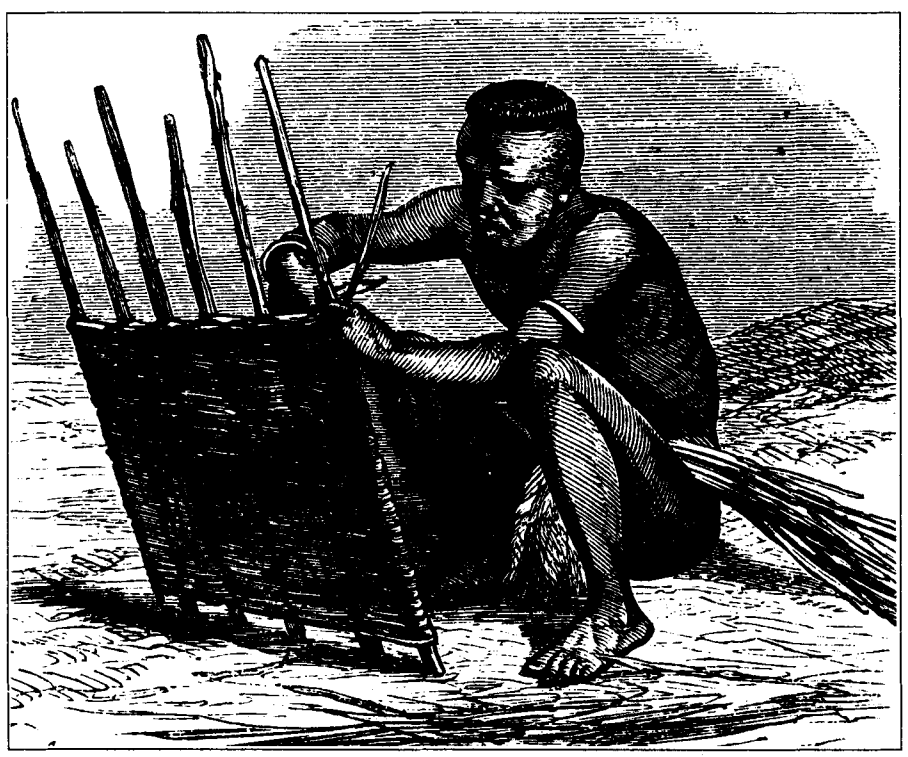
There is in the English-speaking community, for instance, a distinct left current among intellectuals, students, and professionals. At the University of Cape Town, we were told by faculty members that "to be a liberal in an English [language] university today is to be a conservative" relative to the spectrum of academic opinion. A "near-Marxist paradigm" dominates South African studies. And in all disciplines there is pressure to make courses "relevant" and "Africanized."

We were taken to a theater in Cape Town to see a currently popular play, *Born in the RSA*, which turned out to be a political tract set to stage, reminiscent of the most ideological products of the WPA. The narrator, a white woman lawyer who was clearly the voice of the playwright, speaks of her wish to see a burning tire placed around someone's neck. And a gentle, likable black character graphically describes his fantasy of wading among a school yard full of young white girls, swinging a baseball bat and beating them all to death—a fantasy that seemed intended as metaphorical justice. The play made me wonder whether the condonation of white liberals and radicals encourages black violence in South Africa's townships, just as it has at times in our own ghettoes.

Most of the English-speaking community, although much more moderate, seems to be unanimously opposed to the social policies of apartheid. The vast majority of English speakers I met were prepared to accept the notion of living in a state governed by blacks. Yet most had some qualms and caveats. They fear rule by black radicals, and they fear socialism. Frightened by the experience of much of the rest of Africa, they are searching for formulas that will protect the white minority: federalism, cantonization, bills of rights, decentralization, bicameralism. I felt that if they could have their way, most of the English-speaking community would prefer to see power handed over from Botha to Buthelezi, while they themselves went about their business in the private sector at arm's length from the affairs of state.

But whatever its wishes, one of the striking things about the English-speaking community is how powerless it feels. We met with the executives of large corporations, the editors of prominent newspapers and magazines, professors at the leading universities, and parliamentarians, and they all spoke of their isolation from political power. These protestations could have been self-serving, but we heard it from too many different mouths to believe that it was a "line" rather than a reality. In the American system, their counterparts wield considerable influence, no matter whether the party they vote for is out of office or the opinions they hold are out of favor. The South African system is much more balkanized.

A township resident coming home with groceries from a white-owned store may be forced to eat the raw meat on the spot or drink down the cooking oil.



The people who hold the most power in South Africa are Afrikaners. They constitute 60 percent of the whites, but their political parties hold 80 percent of the seats in parliament, which is chosen by district, not by proportional representation. As a group they are poorer than English speakers, and they are economically dependent on the public sector, where more than half of their work force is employed.

The Afrikaner political spectrum, except for a few individuals, begins where the English spectrum leaves off and travels rightward. At the liberal end is Foreign Minister R. F. (Pik) Botha, whose recent statement that he could foresee serving under a black State President constituted a landmark in Afrikaner politics. President P. W. Botha (no relation), who leads the 125 National party MPs in a parliament of 180 seats, publicly chastised his minister for the remark, but resisted pressure from the right wing of his party to remove him from the cabinet. Pik Botha is the public face for a group of some thirty to forty of the National party MPs who are said to be in their private views as liberal as the representatives of the Progressive Federal party, the main party of English speakers, which is anti-apartheid and holds twenty-seven seats.

President Botha stands in the ideological center of his party's parliamentary contingent, with some party colleagues feeling that he has set too fast a pace of change, while others find it too slow. The color bar for most public facilities has been dropped, as have restrictions on interracial marriages and sex. A group of middle-of-the-road National MPs with whom we met spoke of the planned lifting of "influx control laws, which would allow blacks to move freely from their homelands to the urban townships. But these townships are already terribly congested, and we asked about ending housing segregation completely so that blacks could seek housing in white areas if they could afford it. The MPs answered that this could not be done at once, but perhaps in stages, beginning with the most expensive housing and gradually working down. This sounded like a crude trick: how many blacks could afford high-priced housing? But it no doubt reflected the fact that the poorer whites are the ones most afraid of integration. Sitting by his backyard pool and tennis court, an English-speaking journalist quoted something a top National party leader recently said to him: "It's all very well for you to welcome the thought of a black neighbor, but my Afrikaner constituents in little boxes are frightened."

One drag on the pace of change is the Conservative party, which has a lot of National MPs looking over their right shoulders. The Conservative party was formed in 1982 by a group of National party MPs that split away in protest against President Botha's program of reform. We met with Dr. Andries Treurnicht, the leader of the Conservatives, at his party's central headquarters in a rundown office building in Pretoria. A couple of blacks lounged on the front steps of the building, but the office had no visible security, and the controversial apostle of apartheid followed us down after the meeting and seemed to have no bodyguard.

Treurnicht greeted us with charm. We went around the table introducing ourselves, and when Nathan Glazer's turn came, a mischievous light of recognition came into Treurnicht's eyes. "And how are things in the melting pot, Professor Glazer?" he asked.

Treurnicht spelled out, in a tone of soft-spoken but confident reasonableness, his plan for reconstructing apartheid. If blacks were enfranchised they would overwhelm whites, he said. The

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path that the government was on, he said, could end with blacks in our neighborhoods, schools, and homes. I asked him what was wrong with social integration if it was not linked to black enfranchisement. You don't understand, he replied, the very reason for the fear of black political power is that it would lead to social integration. "We have more than 300 years of contact with these people," he said. "In ordinary life the gist of the matter is we're not acceptable to each other. The black man is different."

Treurnicht's remarks reflected one of the central characteristics of the South African enigma. It is not hard to empathize with the fear that white South Africans feel about the prospect of black rule, given the experience of other African states and the long history of grievances inflicted against blacks by whites. But these legitimate fears, if I may call them that, are entwined with other motivations not easy to empathize with. No successful solution to South Africa's problems can much indulge white greed and bigotry; neither can it entirely ignore white fears.

The approximately 120,000 Jews in South Africa constitute a percentage of the white population exactly equal to that of Jews in the U.S. population. And they are as prominent and visible in their society as American Jews are in ours. They are not, however, as concentrated in the professions, but are mostly involved in business. A large portion of the officers of the chambers of commerce are Jewish, as are the mayors of several cities and two of the top spokesmen for the Progressive Federal party, Helen Suzman and Harry Schwartz. Schwartz serves both as parliamentary leader and as an active officer of the Jewish Board of Deputies, a dual role that few if any American Jews have been able to play. A wealthy and generous community, they donate more money per capita to Israel than do American Jews—without the incentive of tax deductibility.

In Cape Town, we attended Friday evening services at an orthodox synagogue, one of fifteen that serve a community of 27,000. Fifteen hundred worshipers were in attendance. Among them was the mayor of Cape Town, whose wife had just been chosen South Africa's best-dressed woman.

The Jews of Cape Town sustain a network of some fifty to sixty organizations, devoted to causes ranging from Zionism to social welfare to "Palestine Philately," the society for the promotion of which, quipped Martin Peretz, sounded suspiciously like the name of a PLO front group. Most Jewish children in South Africa attend Jewish day schools, which, unlike the country's public schools, are racially integrated. Some upwardly mobile blacks send their children to these schools, and one Jewish business leader told me with delight that in his daughter's class a black African girl had taken honors in Hebrew.

Despite their visibility, and their prominence as opponents of apartheid, South African Jews told us that they experience no anti-Semitism in their daily lives. This seemed remarkable in a society so race-conscious, and all the more so when we learned that there is a deep history of anti-Semitism. In 1936, before it reached power, the National party proposed a bill classifying Jews as Asians, so their status would have been equivalent to that of the Indians. During World War II the Afrikaners sympathized with Germany, and anti-Semitism remained an explicit part of the National party program until six months before it came to power in 1948. But since then the party has become quite solicitous of Jews. The South African Defense Force, we were told, is the only army other than the Israel Defense Force in which observant Jewish soldiers can receive kosher rations even on the front lines.

Yet South African Jews are frightened. They are frightened of the ANC and the United Democratic Front, a broad coalition widely seen as the legal voice of the ANC. Even the more moderate, non-ANC leaders in the UDF, like Bishop Tutu and Alan Boesak, speak harshly of Israel and have spurned invitations to visit there. The strongly Zionist Jewish community resents this and fears that it is a harbinger of anti-Semitism. The Jews are also fearful that a growing backlash on the Afrikaner right will revive the old tradition of anti-Semitism. Some are shifting their support from the Progressive Federal to the National party in order to strengthen it against the challenge from the Conservatives. Every Jewish family seems to have discussed contingency plans in case it has to flee, yet the community's size remains stable.

How will it all come out? So far, reform has increased expectations faster than it has effected actual changes. The current period of urban unrest began with the constitutional reforms of 1983 that extended the franchise to coloreds and Indians, but not to black Africans. The townships have indeed become ungovernable. And along with the portents of violence from the left, there are nightmarish scenarios of violence from the right. Some voices in the security services speak of an "Argentinian solution," referring to the clandestine, extra-legal acts of the Argentine military which broke the back of the leftist guerrilla movement by causing tens of thousands of its members and sympathizers to "disappear."

Such thoughts in turn raise questions of foreign intervention—by the Soviets or the Americans or the U.N. But then the scenarios become dizzying. Right now, much milder forms of intervention are at issue, economic boycotts and "disinvestment." Whites of all shades of opinion told us that disinvestment would hurt blacks the most. This is probably true, but most blacks don't care. They want every possible pressure for change, and relentless pressure on the government is needed. But by depressing the economy and raising the already high rates of black unemployment, disinvestment makes an explosive situation even more volatile. As Harry Schwartz, a relentless foe of apartheid, put it: "Disinvestment is good for revolution and bad for peaceful change." Many blacks would probably welcome revolution, and, in a sense, because they are disenfranchised they are entitled to it. But it is very doubtful that change brought about through violence would yield a happier, more just South Africa.

There are, however, still rays of hope for peaceful change and a better ending to the sad story of apartheid. There is more of a democratic center to the South African political spectrum than I had imagined. It includes Buthelezi's forces and most English-speaking whites. But the challenge the center faces is daunting because the spectrum is so much broader than our own. To succeed it will have to win support from some Afrikaners and some of the non-Communists now in the ANC/UDF orbit. The prospects may not be good, but only there rests the hope that years of suffering can end in amelioration and justice rather than, as has happened so often elsewhere, in still more suffering. □

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WHY WE TEST NUKES

by Dixy Lee Ray

The current Soviet propaganda campaign, intense both here and abroad, for a comprehensive nuclear test ban began with an announcement from the Kremlin last fall of a self-imposed moratorium on testing. The Soviets called on the U.S. to follow suit—an appeal made, as usual, through television and news outlets rather than through proper diplomatic channels. The publicly broadcast appeal came immediately after the Soviets had completed an extensive series of underground tests of their own, and would not need to test again for some time. Nevertheless the campaign is unrelenting; in this country it has been picked up by church organizations, local disarmament groups, and even some members of Congress.

But the calls for a ban on nuclear testing overlook the many reasons why tests are conducted in the first place. The assumption that testing is solely or even primarily for the purpose of adding still more weapons to existing arsenals is simple-minded and deeply mistaken.

Since 1945, the nature of the nuclear threat has changed greatly, and deterrence, which requires the maintenance of a credible weapons stockpile, has responded to those technological developments. Today's weapons are not, as is so often implied, just as indiscriminate but more powerful than the bombs used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the 1960s, for example, the total destructive potential of our nuclear arsenal was four times as great as it is today. Modernization of our stockpile over the last twenty years has produced warheads that are smaller, more compact, incorporate less fissionable material, are safer for handling and transportation, less susceptible to tampering and unauthorized uses, create less fallout, and are designed specifically for military targets instead of civilian populations. All these improvements have required new weapons designs, and these designs must be tested.

Nuclear weapons exist; and since they exist we have the corollary responsibility to ensure that they are as safe, controllable, and reliable as humanly possible. This requires research and development, of which testing is an indispensable component. Moreover, for nuclear weapons to be credible we must know, with certainty, that the weapons will work as planned if called upon to do so. We cannot afford any "paper tigers" in the stockpile. But there's the rub. Nuclear weapons are very complex devices that are perishable. They deteriorate in time and become unreliable, inoperable, or function differently from the way they were designed. According to current estimates, the reliable life of a nuclear warhead does not exceed twenty years.

For nuclear weapons it is not necessarily a matter of "wearing out"; they are required to operate only once. There is essentially no wear except for that associated with handling and transport. But, like some household appliances that have been stored for several years unused in a family's basement, when closely inspected they may be found to have deteriorated into an unusable condition.

This susceptibility to deterioration tends to be much higher for nuclear weapons than for other equipment, partly because weapon design must be determined mainly by the desired weapon performance and by safety considerations rather than by demands for resistance to deterioration. Chemically reactive materials such as uranium, plutonium, high explosives, and plastics are inherently required in nuclear weapons. The fissile materials are subject to corrosion. Plastic-bonded high explosives and other plastics tend to decompose over time.

U.S. practice has been to monitor the nuclear stockpile closely in order to detect deterioration at an early stage. Monitoring requires a sample inspection of each weapon type. This is not as easy as it might seem. The weapon must be taken apart for the internal components to be inspected, which is more than a simple matter of undoing some bolts and screws to separate the various parts. U.S. nuclear warheads are brazed, welded, and cemented together. To disassemble a modern weapon is to destroy it; many portions have to be machined apart. Few of the components could be reassembled and used again in a rebuilt weapon. Generally only the nuclear material is worth recovering, and it must be melted down and refabricated. If deterioration is found during the inspection, the weapon might require redesign to avoid the problem. Any design change introduces some degree of uncertainty, which may need to be resolved by a nuclear test. If the warhead requires replacement by a different type, the replacement warhead will need various certification tests in its new role. It will also require non-nuclear operational tests in the environment of the carrier vehicle, which could mean developmental flight tests—these are also prohibited under most test-ban proposals. Were there to be a ban on testing, the U.S. would have no effective means to rehabilitate its stockpiled weapons.

Those who support a nuclear test ban usually include the words "mutual" and "verifiable." In reality a test ban could be neither. First, although the proposals are always aimed at the United States and the Soviet Union, both China and France possess nuclear arms and delivery systems, and both have stated unequivocally that they will continue testing regardless of what the U.S. and the Soviet Union agree to. Moreover, expectations of a mutual and verifiable ban ignore the events of the last thirty years. Practices we would view as unacceptable, or even illegal, have been treated by the Soviets as allowable within the context of specified agreements.

On August 22, 1958, President Eisenhower announced that the United States was "prepared, unless testing is resumed by the Soviet Union, to withhold further testing . . . for a period of one year." This unilateral moratorium began on October 31, the day test ban negotiations were scheduled to begin in Geneva. Despite concerted efforts by the Eisenhower

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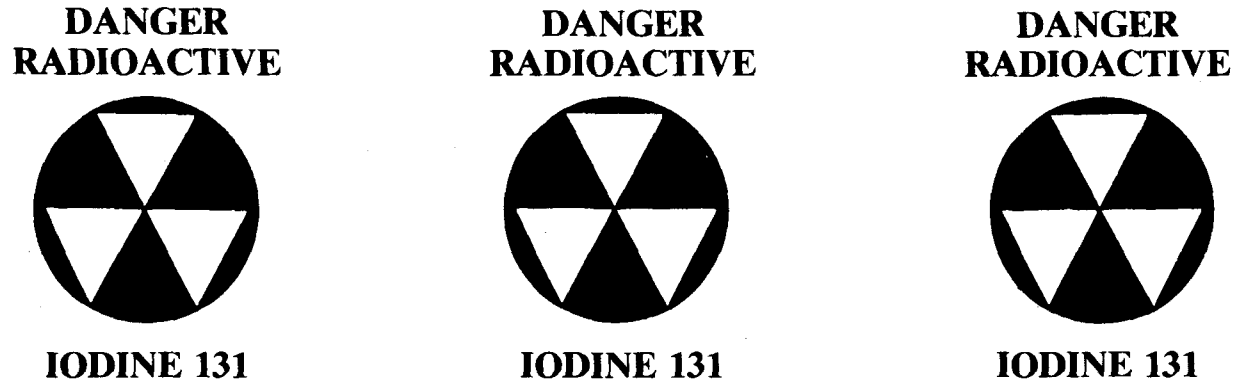
Administration in 1959, the U.S. delegation in Geneva was unable to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on the terms of the test ban. Finally, the administration agreed to the USSR's insistence that a test ban be considered separate from other arms control issues. The U.S. proposed a ban to cover "all tests above the ground up to the greatest heights to which effective controls can now be agreed, all tests in the oceans, and all underground tests above a seismic threshold of 4.5." The Soviet Union accepted these terms and added a condition of its own—that the major powers agree to a three-year moratorium on *all* tests, including those below the threshold. As Atomic Energy Commission Chairman McCone pointed out, the Soviet proposal amounted to nothing more than a comprehensive test ban without safeguards. But so great was the public sentiment to cease testing that the U.S. accepted the proposal. The "mutual" test ban began.

Then what happened? Fruitless discussions on verification and other issues continued in Geneva while President Kennedy supported the ban, and all U.S. weapons work, including research and development, remained on hold. Months passed, and while discussions were still in progress, the Soviet Union, on August 30, 1961, announced its intention to resume testing. Its first nuclear test took place the next day and it continued testing until August 1963. The Soviet program consisted of about one hundred tests in the atmosphere, an unknown number underground, and several at very high altitudes. Some of the high altitude tests involved previously launched missiles, and it is likely that the Soviets learned, at this time, both how such explosions can be masked by the sun and about the X-ray effect from hydrogen bombs. The shots in this Soviet series ranged from very small yields to the largest nuclear explosive test ever conducted, 58 megatons. (The largest test ever conducted by the U.S. was in the Castle series in March 1953, measuring 15 megatons.)

In the two years 1961-63 the Soviets conducted elaborate weapon systems tests and very complex tests involving missiles and radars, all of which took long lead-time preparation. The USSR conducted more tests above one megaton than the U.S. has in its entire history, about three hundred megatons in total. The United States has detonated only about one-tenth of that.

The Soviet resumption of testing caught the United States totally unprepared. We know now that whereas the U.S. held a substantial lead in nuclear technology in 1959, by 1963 that lead had essentially disappeared as a result of this Soviet test series. It is fair to say that while the U.S. observed the test moratorium and refrained from even research and development on improved weapons systems, the Soviet Union used the moratorium to conceal its preparations for the world's largest, most extensive, and best-planned series of tests searching for improved nuclear weapons technology. The Soviets can protest that, technically, they did not break the moratorium because they did not actually conduct any tests during it. But they made all the extensive preparations for the tests at this time, since they were able to execute a great many within a month of starting up. (The typical lead time for preparing a test is six to eighteen months.)

Verification of a test ban is one of the most difficult issues to understand, and one of the most important. In principle, the USSR has agreed to voluntary site inspection, but in fact the Soviets are demanding that the United States (and any other nation) be required to produce extensive seismic proof that a test has been conducted before the Soviets even consider a request for onsite inspection. Should the Soviet Union conduct a secret test, the conclusive evidence we



Within days of the Chernobyl accident I warned my 6,000 readers:

Do not drink more than 63,000 gallons of rain water!

My name is Petr Beckmann. I am Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering at the University of Colorado, and I publish a pro-science, pro-technology, pro-free enterprise monthly newletter, *Access to Energy*.

As for those 63,000 gallons, my readers know **why** they are safe. I don't ask them to trust and parrot me, I ask them to think.

In this case, I told them how much radioactive iodine 131 is given to a *healthy* patient in a thyroid check (a cancer patient is given much more): up to 90 microcuries. And I reported the maximum measured activity in rainwater washing out Chernobyl's iodine over the US: 0.00036 microcuries per liter. There's about 4 liters to the gallon; hence 63,000 gallons of "contaminated" rain water "full of fall-out" will give you as much radioactive iodine as you get when you have your thyroid checked.

Does that tiny grain of knowledge make you feel good?

It should, because America's news media and largest periodicals don't have it.

They work by the T&P (trust and parrot) method. They may differ in whom to trust and parrot; but they share a common inability to evaluate. They will find two opposing viewpoints and manufacture a "controversy;" for they think objectivity lies halfway between the truth and a lie. (Remember how they brought in the Union of Concerned Scientists and other phonies to question the "official assurances of no health dangers"?)

Were you fed the media fixation that Chernobyl was a "meltdown"? *Access to Energy* informed its readers why the Soviets would have thanked their lucky stars if a meltdown had been all they had on their hands.

Access to Energy readers have known for many years that the Soviets do not have containment buildings, for they are more troublesome to build than making new Ukranians; but readers also know why containment buildings are merely safety measures preventing consequences *after* things have gone wrong. And readers were informed why certain things, such as the Chernobyl accident, cannot happen in America: they are not prevented by safety equipment, but by physical laws.

Access to Energy pointed out *at the time* that the Three Mile Island accident would cost more than one life per week: not from any radiation, but in the fuel cycle of the *substitute* power, mostly coal-fired, that had to be brought in to replace the safer and healthier way of generating electric power.

In the Chernobyl accident, *Access to Energy* pointed out how easy it will be for the Soviets to cover up the deaths from radiation sickness and delayed cancers, and why they will not even bother to dilute contaminated wheat with grain from elsewhere. "A little cesium and strontium will give the Russians a more varied diet: like Markey, Solarz, Schroeder, and the other antinuclear breast-beaters in Congress, the Soviets care only about *visible* deaths."

But *Access to Energy* is not just about nuclear energy (which is merely a blatant case of superstition mongering). It is about the truth and how to arrive at it — in all fields.

If you think corporations can be taxed without passing the tax to the consumer, join Ralph Nader to soak the rich.

If you are looking for somebody to trust and parrot, get your opinions from the network newscasters and newspaper analysts, who are mostly trusting and parroting each other.

If you think that war is caused by weapons, join Gulagchev's peace-marching stooges.

But if you want to form an opinion by rational conclusions from measured data, subscribe to *Access to Energy*.

ACCESS TO ENERGY
Box 2298-A
Boulder, CO 80306

Enter my subscription to *Access to Energy* for one year (12 monthly issues). Include issue on the Chernobyl accident, free. [Offer limited to new subscribers.] **My check for $22 is enclosed.** [Overseas subscriptions, by air mail only, $30, drawn on a US bank.]
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are least likely to have is seismic.

True, the pattern differences between earthquakes and nuclear explosions are easy to discern if the waves are received strong and clear. But the waves lose their identity at lower levels. True, there is an international network of seismic receiving stations. But there are also a large number of unidentified seismic events every year. Signals are confused in the natural noise of the earth, and many events simply escape seismic detection.

Moreover, tests are now usually identified because of their known location near a test site, or because of other identifying information. Tests conducted in hard rock are more easily identified than those detonated in soft earth, and it makes a big difference whether the test takes place above or below the water table. Shifting the test to previously unused areas of different geologic composition or into seismically active regions would make accurate seismic detection much more difficult and uncertain. Finally, tests can be camouflaged in real earthquakes, multiple detonations can be designed to simulate earthquakes, and nuclear explosions can be set off in large "decoupling" cavities such as salt domes and even contained in large steel spheres.

The United States would find it hard to detect such tests, and even if they were detected we would have much greater difficulty identifying them. Should the U.S. discover what it believed to be a covert Soviet test, it would be hard to pinpoint the exact location, and to provide sufficient proof to convince a world which did not wish to see violations that indeed a violation had already occurred. What remedy would be available to the United States if the Soviet Union refused to acknowledge its violation and also refused to permit onsite inspection? As long as the Soviet Union insists that onsite inspection is essentially voluntary, on a case-by-case basis, and requires seismic evidence to support an inspection request, non-seismic intelligence will be of limited value to enforce a comprehensive test ban treaty.

In the absence of clear and unambiguous safeguards including guaranteed onsite verification, issues that are still unresolved despite more than a quarter century of effort, a nuclear test ban is not in the best interest of the United States or of the free world. □

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

THE MALTESE FALTER

by William McGurn

Valetta, Malta—In a country known for its *festi*, or religious festivals, Easter week in Malta is one of the more colorful, with each parish trying to outdo its neighbor. Thus Mosta boasts a solemn Good Friday procession of biblical characters and holy statues, followed by hooded, white-robed *penitentes* slogging through the streets with heavy chains tied to their feet, while on Easter Sunday the men in another parish heave a life-size statue of Christ in the air to signify He is Risen. Amid the celebrations the tourist might be hard-pressed to find any dark shadows falling on this tiny, sun-drenched island sixty miles to the south of Sicily.

But at the same time the pious Maltese were preparing for Easter their unelected prime minister, Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, was making a pilgrimage to Tripoli. There he told Muammar Qaddafi that the Maltese were "one with the people of Libya" during this "grave hour"—i.e., the skirmish with the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Gulf of Sidra. If the tourist looked a bit closer, he would find other disquieting signs. The Grand Harbor that once played host to Phoenician trading galleys and as recently as 1979 served as a strategic British port now caters to Soviet tankers. Opening up the socialist daily, he would find an advertisement for Libyan mercenaries to fight against "U.S. aggression" (*before* the strike against Qaddafi). Further inland, the visitor might be surprised to find a branch office of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a police force armed and trained by the North Koreans, and an alarming number of Libyan males of military age.

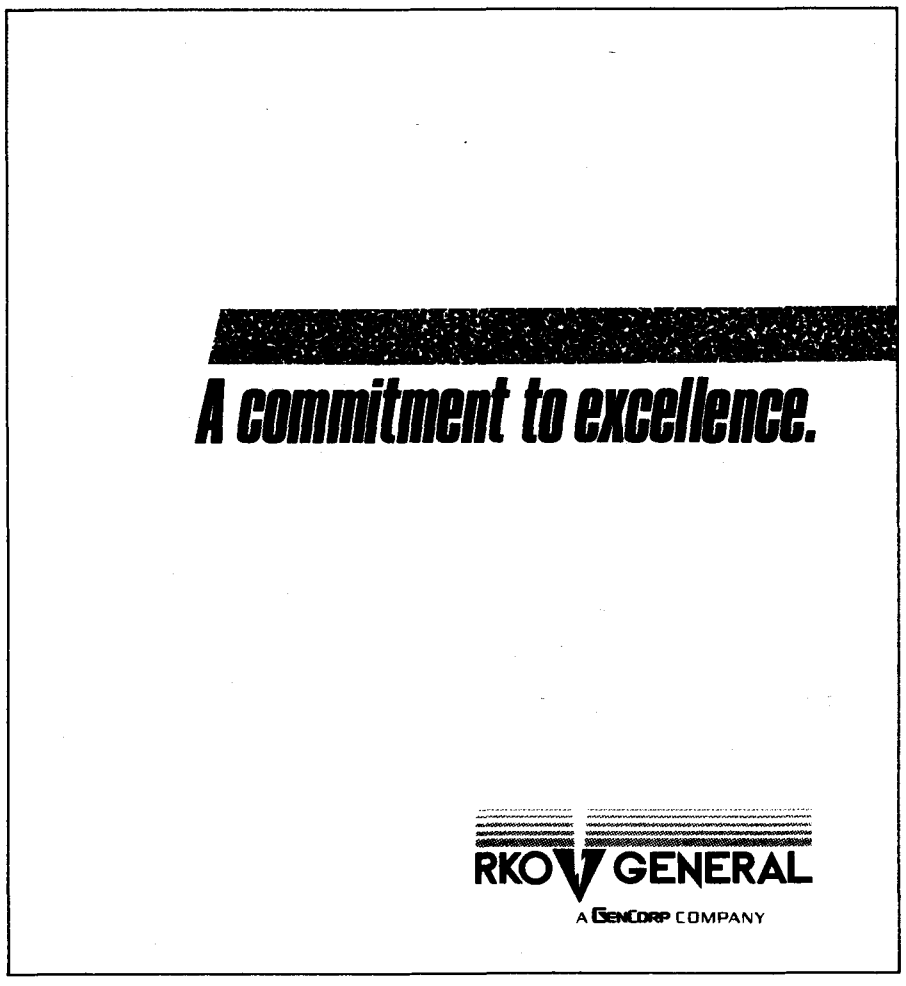
Welcome to Malta, problem child of the Mediterranean.

In its move toward the Soviets and the "non-aligned" bloc, tiny Malta is rumbling down the same path that has proved so disastrous for other erstwhile European colonies. But in this country, where the British are still popular, the violent lurch belies a long and noble tradition as a Western bastion. Only four decades ago this little island stood alone in the entire Mediterranean against a ferocious air attack by the Axis powers, a display of fortitude that earned the Maltese the King George Cross that today adorns their flag. Some four centuries before that this same island—with a handful of armed knights and a few thousand locals—repulsed the vastly superior forces of the Sultan of Turkey in a victory that set church bells a-ringing even in the Protestant England of Elizabeth I. Called the Great Siege, the battle reversed the direction of history in favor of Christian Europe.

Today Malta is in the midst of a second siege on the Western way of life, but this time from within. The lion's share of the credit for the country's slide from democracy and its newfound kinship with folks like Kim Il Sung and Colonel Qaddafi (both of whom have been decorated with Malta's highest honor) belongs to its prime minister until 1985, Dom Mintoff. A Rhodes scholar, Mintoff was said to have ruled the island with the contempt of a colonial governor, and this description was lent credence by the successor he chose to inflict on his people, his education minister, Mifsud Bonnici. Having led his people from a robust democracy to the fringes of the collectivist Promised Land, Mintoff has left it to Mifsud Bonnici to cross the Jordan.

No doubt there is a dash of malice in this choice, considering that the humorless Mifsud Bonnici early in his career backed the island's reactionary archbishop, the late Michael Gonzi, in the latter's efforts to deny the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church to Mintoff and other Labor party leaders, this in what is probably Europe's most devout country. "You have to understand that Mintoff is a rogue," says one supporter of the opposition Nationalist party. "Mifsud Bonnici, on the other hand, has merely switched religions. He is as zealous for socialism today as he was for Christianity twenty years ago." Nicknamed

William McGurn is editorial features editor of the Wall Street Journal/ Europe *and a European editor of* The American Spectator.



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"Dr. Zero" by his opponents because he has never been elected to any office, Mifsud Bonnici is feared because he appears to believe all the nonsense Mintoff spouted just to attract attention.

For the unfortunate souls who have had to endure his Labor party, however, it matters not whether Mintoff was opportunist or ideologue. The bottom line is still a smorgasbord of Marxist-inspired programs administered with all the delicacy of a Chicago pimp. Thus has Malta seen its one university brought to heel, a worker/student plan from China's Cultural Revolution adopted, links with the Soviet bloc and the Arabs fostered, a PLO office opened, the Israeli *chargé d'affairs* shot at and that embassy closed, the country's largest trade union legally incorporated into the Labor party, and the sole independent newspaper—the pro-Western *Times* of Malta—looted and burnt down by a Labor mob.

Two years ago Mintoff started a row with the local church over the latter's school system, which he said had to be free. During the ensuing confrontation (which is still unresolved) it was Mifsud Bonnici who as education and deputy prime minister did the most to fan the flames. At one point he delivered a rousing speech to a mob of dockworkers (many brandishing weapons) and led them through the streets of this capital city, where a group then attacked the church curia—just ten yards from the police station—desecrating altars and ransacking the archbishop's office. Though Mifsud Bonnici disclaims any responsibility, he did tell me at the time that the attack was "fortunate" if it persuaded people to think twice about bucking the will of the Labor party. Recently, too, he said that he was ready to take to the streets again.

That's not the sort of thing that shows up in the government's newsletter sent abroad, especially with elections a year away and Mifsud Bonnici badly in need of Western money to patch up the economy his ruling party has done so much to wreck. Nor does this newsletter focus on the military treaty with Libya, which some fear might be invoked to ensure a Labor victory next time around. Already locals are talking about "taking" a victory *à la* Corazon Aquino should the government try to steal it again. "The problem may come," says one Maltese, "when Mifsud Bonnici finds he cannot win an election but realizes he can still govern."

Fueling such fears are the prime minister's past statements that elections might be "useless and baseless." This kind of talk, together with the nasty harassment of opposition voices, has attracted the unwanted attention of foreign journalists and human-rights delegations from the European Parliament to the Helsinki watchers, and matters were not helped last year when Mifsud Bonnici clapped into prison an Italian Christian Democrat politician on the island to give a speech. Nor is it alleviated by something called the "Foreign Interference Act," a law that can be used against foreign journalists reporting in Malta and which some believe might be invoked as an excuse for suspending the next elections. Given too that the Labor party lost the last one but still managed through some crude gerrymandering to carve out a three-seat majority in the 65-seat parliament; one ought not underestimate the lengths to which this party will go to stay in power.

Adding to this fear is that unlike other Third World-style demagogues, Mifsud Bonnici gives no evidence of the traditional vices open to those in power: wine, women, or riches. He still lives quietly at home with his brother, a priest, and is known to be ruthlessly scrupulous about personal gain. In other words, apart from the outright toppling of the Libyan strength behind him, there is nothing this world has to offer that might keep the prime minister of this strategic island-paradise from turning it into the Cuba of the Mediterranean—except for his own better judgment.

And that of course is just what has the rest of us so worried. □

AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS

FAST TIMES ON PARLIAMENT HILL

by Malcolm Gladwell

On March 10 of this year, after a hearty breakfast of three eggs, four slices of toast, cheese, orange juice, and coffee, Jacques Hébert took his red sleeping bag and three bottles of Perrier and lay down in the foyer of the Canadian Senate building in Ottawa. There he would remain for three weeks, holding court, receiving visitors, granting interviews—but never eating. For the Prime Minister of Canada had tried to cut Hebert's favorite government program, and Jacques Hébert—Senator Jacques Hébert of the Parliament's Upper House—was on a hunger strike.

There have been other, more spectacular hunger strikes of course. In 1981 IRA terrorist Bobby Sands languished in a Northern Ireland cell for 66 days. But Sands was a young man disciplined by conflict. Hébert is a 62-year-old with a history of heart trouble. Although his friends spoke poignantly of his strength and commitment—"Jacques has the drive of a pioneer and the strength of a bull. He can move mountains to get what he wants"—it was clear they were worried. By March 21 Hébert's heartbeat was irregular. Three days later he admitted to feeling weak for the first time—"tired, but alive." As his weight plummeted, Hébert's physician, Dr. Byron Hyde, instituted daily urine tests. Two doctors trained in Chinese massage techniques were called in to help the Senator deal with increasingly worrisome bouts of insomnia.

Was it worth it? Many close to the scene had their doubts. At stake was only a $20 million relic from the Trudeau era, an "outward bound"-style jobs program for youth, called Katimavik. Hébert's party leader John Turner counseled an end to the protest, and a television poll showed that an overwhelming majority of Canadians felt the same way. Novelist Mordecai Richler called Hébert a pretentious bore. Prime Minister Mulroney answered Hébert's *cri de coeur* on behalf of Canadian youth with a one-sentence form letter thanking the Senator for his interest in the problem. And when Hébert's mentor, Pierre Trudeau, finally showed up, he told reporters that his visit was only a "photo opportunity" and went straight to lunch.

But Hébert was insistent. Flanked day and night by his trusted personal aide Guy de Grandpré, a staffer from his office, his doctors, and a battery of cameras and newsmen, he invoked memories of Mahatma Gandhi. He knew his cause was just and that the public support was there, even if no one else did: "I see the numbers of letters published in the newspapers. That's a sign." He had faith that others would soon sense the importance of his mission: "There must be a Gallup poll that will be taken any time, I presume." "If need be, Jacques will be prepared to go all the way," Dr. Hyde told reporters. "But not to the point of death. I don't think he would go to that point because he wouldn't be able to come back and fight again."

Today the deadly game of chicken is over. The Mulroney government made Hébert a face-saving offer, that, after twenty-one days on the hard marble floor of the Senate lobby, he could not refuse. A special committee of prominent politicians, academics, and dignitaries has been set up to look for ways to revive Katimavik. Some have suggested that the program become a non-profit corporation, and others that it be expanded to include not just unemployed youth but also retired civil servants and suburban housewives. What is more likely, however, is that the whole matter will just quietly fade away.

Hébert tried to maintain that Katimavik was of critical importance, but it was really just an adventure, an extended summer camp for a few thous-

Malcolm Gladwell's last article for The American Spectator *was "Fast Times at Dartmouth High," an attack on the administration of Dartmouth College.*

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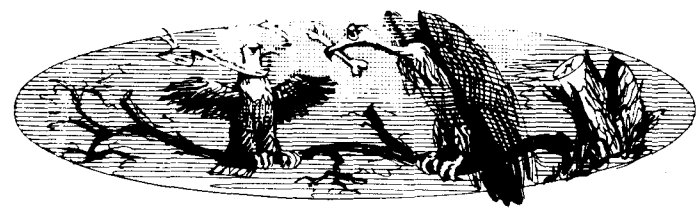
and stray youth a year. For nine months volunteers between the ages of 17 and 21 would do community work throughout Canada for a dollar a day. "I learned to use survey equipment and to write a good résumé," is how the recruitment brochure quotes one graduate. "I cleaned up a wood lot and added sunshine to the lives of handicapped children." "I learned French while renovating a home for the aged." At the end of their term, students were expected to have found themselves and were rewarded with $1,000.

But that didn't always happen. Despite lofty goals and a budget that came to $10,000 per head, about a third of Katimavik participants thought their jobs were dull and unfulfilling. At its best, Katimavik amounted to shipping kids from Ontario and Quebec 3,000 miles to mow lawns in the Yukon. At the height of the furor the Conservative government released the findings of a special report on the Katimavik program. It found that nearly three-quarters of the participants drank too much, and 55 percent admitted they used drugs. In Ottawa, on Parliament Hill, this was considered shocking, but among Canadian youth it was hardly news at all. For the middle-class kids who flocked to the program, Katimavik was considered little more than a good time. "You could always recognize the Katimavik people," says John Clark, a former travel guide who ran into them often, "because they were the ones necking in the bus station." One-time summer camp instructor Tom Connell recalls taking a Katimavik group on a canoeing trip. "Usually on these trips we would do twenty miles a day, but with Katimavik we did about six miles in four days. They insisted on stopping every ten minutes to take their clothes off."

Where Senator Jacques Hébert goes from here is not clear. Ottawa's present government-slashing mood clearly has Hébert's doctors and close family and friends concerned. In the meantime, however, his actions have forced Canadians to take a step back and ask some tough questions about their democracy. Some have argued that Hébert should have waited until he was no longer a member of the Senate to stage his protest. Others, like the government leader in the Senate, Duff Roblin, have complained that Hébert should have held his hunger strike from his desk in the chamber and not the lobby because that implied that "what we say here doesn't count." One thing's for sure. Wherever Hébert starves next, controversy will follow. □

THE NATION'S PULSE



THE SOBRAN SCANDAL

by Joseph Sobran

Even for a journalist I lead a pretty dull life. I'm not one of those relentless investigative chaps who get anonymous threats from husky-voiced guys on the phone telling them how many different pieces they'll wind up in if they don't lay off the big story. I've never been romantically linked with actresses in the gossip columns or arrested at an airport. I did get a parking ticket at an airport once, but I managed to keep it off the front pages. And that's the way I like it—a nice, quiet existence.

Judge of my dismay, then, when I picked up my *Wall Street Journal* one morning as I sipped my coffee and, expecting nothing more heart-pounding than (say) a stern editorial on marginal tax rates, found *my name at the center of a scandal.*

Coffee spurted from my nose. The room swam like Mark Spitz. My whole life seemed to flash before my eyes. Was it possible? Yes . . . there it was, in black and white . . . "Sobran . . . scandal . . . *The American Spectator.*"

Briefly forgetting myself, I uttered a dreadful oath. Dreadful by my standards, anyway. I had only myself to blame. I had always known, in the back of my mind, that my association with this journal, though unfailingly pleasant and lucrative, could only lead to dire consequences for my reputation.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. I had better reconstruct the events and allegations leading up to the morning I refer to. The morning when my hitherto tranquil life was shattered, perhaps forever.

A few months ago, a book by William F. Buckley, Jr., gathering dozens of his columns over several years, was published under the title *Right Reason.* It was reviewed by Henry Fairlie in the *New Republic*, and by me in *The American Spectator.* This may not sound like the makings of scandal, but an unsuspecting world was to learn otherwise.

Fairlie is an English gent who, it transpired, had known Buckley some years ago. One of the columns in *Right Reason* took him to task for comparing the Republican delegates at the 1980 convention to the sort of people who elected Adolf Hitler. (For the uninitiated, it should be explained that Hitler's name is mud nowadays.) Buckley made some sport of Fairlie's hyperbole, manners, grammar, and love of the bottle.

Fairlie glancingly mentioned that he was attacked in the book and proceeded to give not only the book but Buckley's life, intellect, talents, and character a somewhat unfavorable review. Buckley replied by taking out a full-page ad in the *New Republic* reprinting the column about Fairlie. It was a few weeks after this that my own review of the same book appeared in *The American Spectator.*

This was where matters stood when the *Wall Street Journal* ran a story by Claudia Rosett about Buckley, Fairlie, and me. The story introduced a new character: Leon Wieseltier, the book review editor of the *New Republic.*

Miss Rosett asked Wieseltier if he really thought it was proper for Fairlie to review a book in which he was ridiculed. Wieseltier said it certainly *was* proper, but added that it was "scandalous" and "utterly incestuous" that the *Spectator* should have given the same book to *me* to review. Miss Rosett explained to *Journal* readers that I was "one of Mr. Buckley's longtime staffers at *National Review.*"

The secret was out. There is no point in denying it now. I *am* one of Buckley's longtime staffers. Actually, the secret was out long ago. It was divulged yet again in the identifying note that accompanied my review. Some reckless, mindless functionary at the *Spectator*, forgetting the adage that loose lips sink ships, had told the reading public that I was "a senior editor of *National Review*," thereby vitiating the impact of my praise of the book and playing right into Wieseltier's hands.

Who, it will be asked, is this Wieseltier and what does he want? I have met him only once. He struck me as a young and intelligent man. Of the several articles of his I've read, the only one I remember clearly was one that snarled that conservatives lack compassion and cling to privilege, or words to that effect. He cited Michael Oakeshott as a case in point. It should have been foreseeable that a young man who could regard Michael Oakeshott as his moral inferior would find J. Sobran a particularly poor moral specimen. It is especially crushing that he should find Henry Fairlie more to his liking.

As a senior staffer at *National Review*, I am privy to the information that Fairlie borrowed several hundred dollars from Buckley years ago and, promising to repay it forthwith, vanished. He has now repaid Buckley, after his fashion.

As for me, I thought it best to lie low for a few days after the scandal broke. I stocked up on cheap cigars and disconnected my phone, pondering my next move. It's too early to judge the ultimate effect on my career, but I draw solace from the recent appearance of Richard Nixon on the cover of *Newsweek*. Nixon's name is still mud over at the *New Republic*, where scandal is deplored and rectitude prized, but his rehabilitation holds out the promise of a new dawn to us sinners. Meanwhile, I can peddle my sordid tale to cheap tabloids like this one. □

Joseph Sobran is one of William Buckley's longtime staffers at National Review *and a nationally syndicated columnist.*

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A ROOM WITH A VIEW

by George Sim Johnston

The perils of adapting a good novel into film are too well known to rehearse here. Suffice to say that if the adaptation is as earnest and literal as the previous efforts of the Merchant Ivory team—if, that is, the film is no more than "literature" conducted by other means—the result is not going to be satisfying. The soul of a movie must be made of celluloid and not paper and ink. The big screen cannot convey what is important in a novel, anyway, since it is not so much what the characters say and do as the envelope of prose around them which make it worth reading. The smaller the novel, the more likely it is that it can be made into a good film. A crude piece of writing like *The World According to Garp* has a fighting chance in Hollywood, especially with a director like George Roy Hill, while *The Great Gatsby* has gone down to defeat at least twice (I have not seen the silent version, but do not have my hopes up). *Brideshead Revisited*, probably the best series ever done on public television, is an exception which proves the rule, because the producers had thirteen hours to work with and were able to serve up a healthy portion of Waugh's prose in the voice-overs.

But even a director of genius could not have crammed *Brideshead* into two hours and come up with a good movie. Waugh himself recognized this as he wrangled with MGM over the film rights in 1947. To his relief, the film was never made. Merchant Ivory Productions, the maker of *A Room with a View*, did not shy in their last outing from trying to catch a big literary fish with a small net. Their prey was Henry James's *The Bostonians*. Now, James's novels, if you exclude his early simple efforts like *Washington Square* (which was once made into a rather decent film with Montgomery Clift) are hopeless movie fare. How do you get the endless ramifications of a single James sentence on celluloid? The answer is, you don't—and you are left with a stilted costume party.

E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* is a much smaller affair than *The Bostonians*. And for a film-maker it has the added virtue that the "story" can be safely extricated from the "idea" behind it without losing anything essential. Forster had a hopelessly split personality as a writer. On the one hand he was an exquisite writer of social comedy, a miniaturist of Edwardian drawing-room manners. On the other hand, he was a homosexual pantheist who detested northern Protestant civilization and worshiped the pagan Mediterranean (or his selective version of it). This split between the artist and the thinker (and the first is so much greater than the second) runs like a fissure through his first four novels. Only in *A Passage to India* was he able to transcend it. After that he lapsed into his famous silence, during which he wrote naughty tales of buggery which he showed to friends and which were published after his death.

In *A Room with a View* a delightful comedy of manners is coupled with a diatribe against Christianity, heterosexual love, and the English bourgeoisie. What holds the novel together is Forster's exquisite irony and great charm as a storyteller. The Ivory team has wisely jettisoned most of the homosexual polemics (but not the intriguing homosexual undercurrents in some of the characters) and kept the charming, if slight, love story intact. By itself, the story has good narrative bones for a film-maker to work with; it is a closet drama which holds Mr. Ivory's camera quite comfortably.

The film certainly takes its time getting off the ground, though. The second half, which is set in the English countryside, comes off much better than the opening scenes in and around Florence. In Italy, Forster meant to expose the priggishness and inadequacy of the English middle class under the blazing light of Mediterranean culture (conveniently shorn of Catholicism). The confrontation is somewhat forced in the book; it is almost ludicrous in the movie. The night I saw the film the audience laughed in many places where I am sure Mr. Ivory did not mean them to laugh. Helena Bonham Carter and Maggie Smith, as Lucy Honeychurch and her spinster guardian-cousin, begin so stiffly that we do not enter their characters at all. Left on the outside, we simply chuckle at their elaborate manners and fussy scruples. For the longest while, I wondered what Miss Carter, who has lips like overripe fruit and gives the impression that she is wearing a tight pair of jeans beneath her gorgeous period gowns, was doing in the role of a protected Edwardian maiden. →

George Sim Johnston is a writer living in New York.

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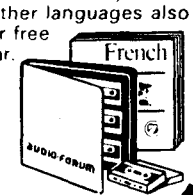

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But both she and the movie warm up once we return to England. The turning point is the famous skinny dipping scene where the Reverend Beebe, George Emerson (who met and kissed Lucy in Italy), and Lucy's brother frolic naked—and full frontal, at that—in the forest. It is Forster's small tribute to the god Pan, and it works better in the movie than it does in the book. The scene is both touching and hilarious and brings us closer not only to these three characters, but also to Lucy and her priggish fiancé, Cecil Vyse, who happen upon the scene. Until then, the audience is alternately amused and bored but never drawn into the story. Now the movie finally comes to life. Miss Carter begins—well, not exactly to act, but her pouts become more expressive; and Maggie Smith stops being merely fussy.

If Forster had had his druthers, the story would have ended with the Reverend Beebe running off with Cecil Vyse. But as the year was 1908 and he wanted to publish, the plot revolves around the competition between Cecil and George Emerson for Lucy's hand and the gradual unwinding of Lucy's self-deception as to where her true affections lie. Of course, we know that George will win. George has passionately kissed Lucy under the golden Tuscan sky in a field of violets, while Cecil only reads of such things in books. George is all awkward instinct, while Cecil is a cultivated cad. But the working out of the tale is full of pleasures, and Forster added the nice touch, which Mr. Ivory has delicately kept intact, of making Cecil quite sympathetic once Lucy has dumped him.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's screenplay has kept the witty bits in the novel while mercifully excising the gay didacticism. She and John Mortimer are the best current practitioners of the "Masterpiece Theater" school of screen-writing. My only complaint is that she did not try to do more for the character of Mr. Emerson, George's bohemian father, who does not come off in either the book or the film. She has also cut some interesting lines at the end of the novel. George and Lucy have eloped to Florence and are back in the Room pawing each other and not paying much attention to the view. George makes two remarks about Lucy's cousin Charlotte which add a necessary final note to this interesting character. As it is, we are left with an unfair impression of the spinster. I would wager that Miss Jhabvala kept the lines in her screenplay, and that Mr. Ivory edited them out for the sake of a more romantic fade-out.

But such are the demands of the medium; you can only work so much exposition into a scene whose main purpose is to show the handsome blond actor Julian Sands finally getting a full repast on Miss Carter's lips. As it is, we should be thankful that the Merchant Ivory team was able to translate a beautiful small book into such a fine film with no further insult to either medium. □

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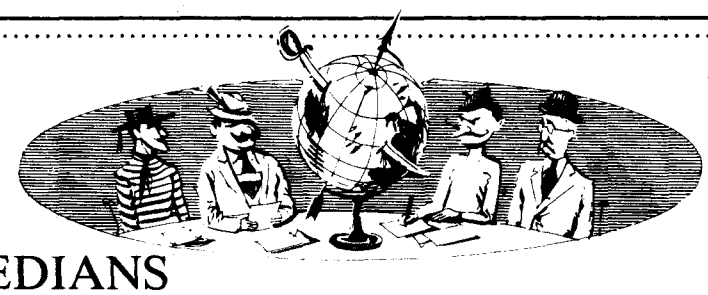

THE COLONEL'S COMEDIANS

by Taki

If you think comedy is dead, you should have been in Europe the week following the Libyan raid by Uncle Sam's air force. In fact, if it wasn't so pathetically funny—as well as predictable—one would have to call it the greatest anti-Western and anti-American propaganda show since Idi Amin used the press as a platform for his murderous buffoonery.

And speaking of buffoonery, there is a lady (well, she's not, really; what I mean to say is that she counts herself among the wimmin) by the name of Kate Adie, who is the BBC's *soi disant* reporter in Tripoli. Mind you, she's nothing of the kind. What she is, is a good old-fashioned propagandess, reminding me at times of that other female defender of radical leftist causes, Christabel What's-her-name. Adie's coverage of the raid made it obvious even to Arab-loving people like myself that her script had been written by the Libyan Information Ministry. The whole TV coverage was made up of shots of weeping children, grieving mothers, and outraged Libyans singing hymns of hatred against Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and the United States.

To call the BBC's coverage of the bombing raid selective would be a gross understatement—a bit like calling Qaddafi unstable. No mention was made of the way Libyan authorities monitored and censored TV film, nor were the viewers made aware of the tight control imposed on journalists in Tripoli. Which only goes to prove that there are more pinkos running key posts in the BBC than there are radiation victims in Chernobyl. What those closet commies did manage was to make sure the viewers remained in the dark about the reasons for the raid, while no effort was made to put the attack into the context of the many outrages perpetrated by Qaddafi's murder squads against civilians.

But back to high comedy. Greece, as usual, led the way. The flim-flam man himself, Andreas Papadoc, was the first prime minister outside the Arab world to congratulate Qaddafi for surviving the raid. (I wish you a long and happy life, and hope that you continue to win your battles against women, children, and the unarmed.) But soon after, word got out that the embattled Yankee tourist may not be flying over this summer, and the greedy ones got worried. Not for long, however. A modern Trojan Horse was constructed and sent into every American living room. It came in the form of a 60-second television commercial using the actor E. G. Marshall. This is the message Marshall delivered in a stentorian voice, and the one that is sure to win the false advertising prize for the year: "Greece, that loving and lovely land, is getting a bum rap. The terrorist act against a TWA jet was not a Greek incident. Quite the opposite. It was Greece that provided safe haven. Indeed, the world's leading aviation agencies have declared Athens airport safe and secure."

The *mauvaise langues* have it that Marshall fell off his chair twice while reading this drivel. But being the good trooper that he is, he finally managed to finish the commercial. Personally, I would give Marshall an Oscar for his performance, because as everyone including the last bearded thug in Beirut knows, Athens is a "safe" haven for terrorists as long as they shoot Yankees but leave citizens of the Republic of Grease minding their olives.

The trouble is that Qaddafi's and Assad's heroes occasionally manage to murder Greeks, too, even if they are Greek-Americans. This is what happened when three TWA passengers were blown out of the airplane after a female terrorist had planted the bomb. Her subsequent denial to the three major networks—as well as to the Greek government—was vintage Marx Brothers. That old clown Tsimas, a man I've written about before, who heads the Greek anti-terrorist squad, once again put on heavy make-up and in an accent

Taki Theodoracopulos is a European editor of The American Spectator.

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which is half Anthony Quinn playing Onassis, and half Zero Mostel in *The Producers*, declared the female terrorist innocent because "she denied having planted the bomb." The fact that she flew to Athens, Rome, and right back to Cairo was explained by Tsimas in quasi-Freudian terms: "She loves to fly, she feels liberated."

Needless to say, it required all the control I could muster not to roll on the ground when I read what the 39th non-President of the USA had to say following the raid. The peanut-brained Georgian once again shot himself in the foot when he said we were wrong to bomb Libya because if he had lost a daughter as had Qaddafi (a fact I suspect is as false as the denials issued by Palestinians after every outrage—at worst, Qaddafi adopted the victim after her death; at best, it never happened) "he would have sworn as long as his life existed to retaliate." Apart from the terrible syntax, the peanut-skinned one conveniently forgot that only this past December Natasha Simpson, the eleven-year-old daughter of an American newspaper man, along with other innocent people, young and old, were brutally slain at the Rome airport. I wonder what he would have said had Miss Lillian, Rosalynn, and that ghastly Amy been blown out of a jet long ago?

And speaking of non-presidencies, what about Bettino Craxi, the Italian version of Carter, a man who makes Neville Chamberlain look like Patton? Craxi's continued appeasement of Arab terror has not spared Italy from terrorist attacks. Yet the day after the raid, Italian newspapers parroted Tass in denouncing the attack. Ironically, most of the newspapers in Italy are owned by my old friend Gianni Agnelli, who on April 18 was a dinner guest of the "man whose tongue speaks with death, bombs, and flame" (no, not my prose, but that of a lasagna paper; sorry Mario). Yes, you guessed it. Agnelli had dinner at the White House, along with Jerry Zipkin, Ronald Perelman and Claudia Cohen Perelman (Perelman owns pantyhose shops), and other such luminaries, including the greatest phony since Baron Munchausen, Karim Aga Khan, the man who is said to collect rather than pay taxes.

Now there's nothing wrong with dining with Agnelli. I've done it hundreds of times. But it is wrong to have the major partner of Qaddafi to dinner, and then bomb his partner. Qaddafi, you see, owns as little as 12 percent or as much as 15 percent of Fiat, the auto giant that is controlled by the Agnelli family, and whose CEO is Gianni. Gianni made Qaddafi partner in a major coup (his words) in 1979, and by doing so gave the murderer the kind of cachet he's been unable to buy despite millions of dollars spent.

But not to worry. Though the Europeans were as supportive of the American retaliation as, say, McGovern was of Eagleton back in 1972, we Yanks were not far behind. There is a fat man by the name of Jimmy Breslin who writes a column in the *New York Daily News*, and who hates Ronald Reagan more than he hates the police. Any police. He called Reagan a baby killer and left it at that. NBC television outdid even the fat man. It gave a platform to Abul Abbas, the mastermind of the *Achille Lauro* seajack, and never even charged him a fee. Unlike the poor Greeks, he got his message across free.

But the best, as always, was my old friend Armand Hammer and Sickle. His oil company was doing business as usual with the Libyans before, during, and after the raid. And if I know my old friend, he will soon be dining once again at the White House, along with Jerry, Karim, and the pantyhose one. And why not? The President works hard and needs to be amused after hours. Why not have clowns to dinner? In Reagan's America, too, comedy is king. □

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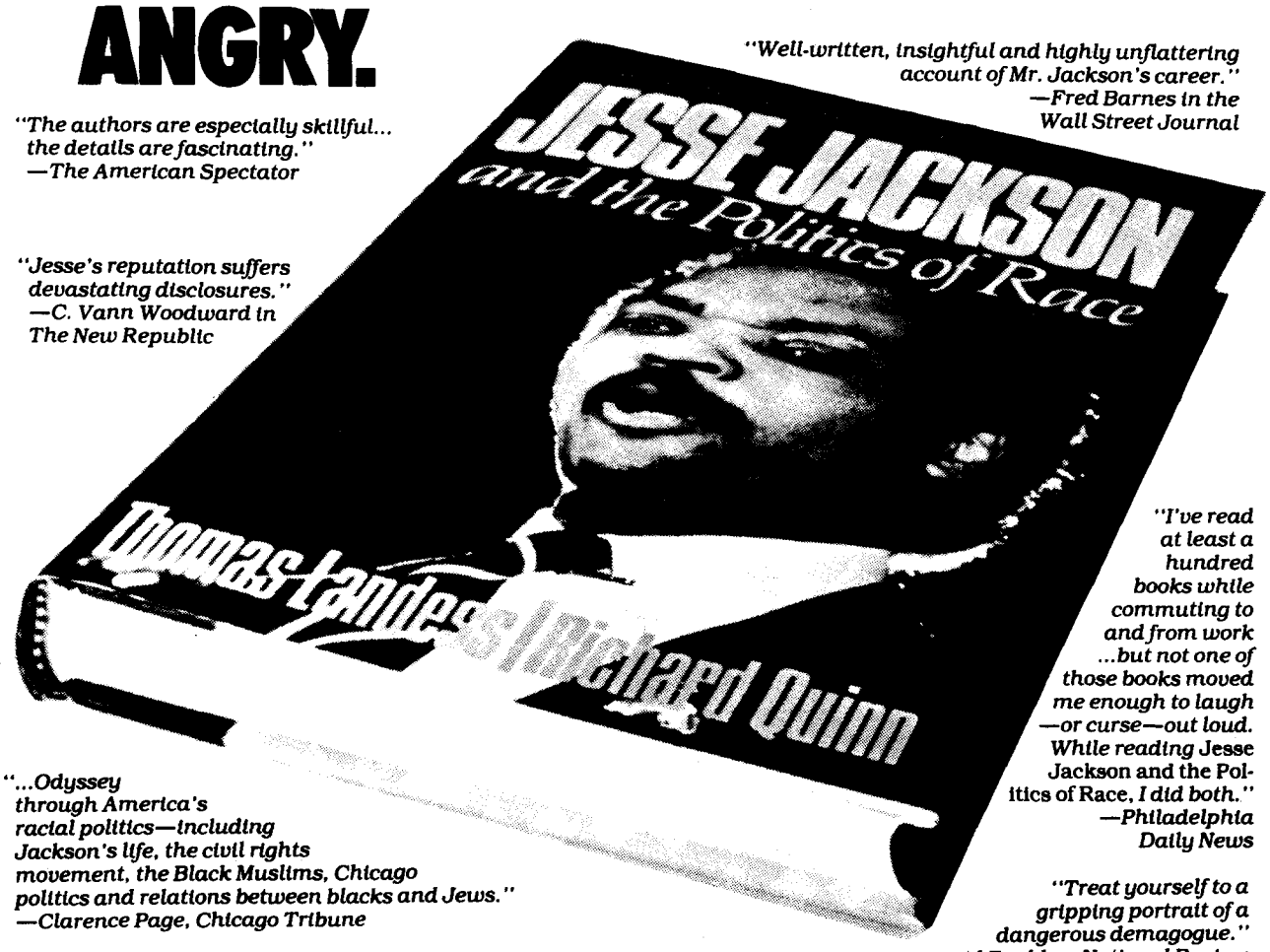

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE KOREAN WAR—PUSAN TO CHOSIN: AN ORAL HISTORY

Donald Knox/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/$24.95

Wayne Michael Sarf

American intervention in the Korean war did achieve its initial objective of saving South Korea from the Communists. But our failure to dictate a peace quite reasonably led to it being considered a no-win war—a test of America's resolve in resisting Red expansion, to be sure, but also a classic case of running to keep in the same place, and a gruesome example of the price which might be demanded by a policy of containment. Neither a "good war" nor by any normal standards a small war, it has failed to attain either the righteous mythology of World War II or the romantic heart-of-darkness pessimism that is one currently popular approach to our Vietnamese involvement. The 35th anniversary of the war's opening guns, like previous anniversaries, passed almost without notice, and there is no national monument, controversial or otherwise, to those who fought in Korea, save for a recent (and typically unimpressive) commemorative stamp. The electronic media generally remind us of the conflict only by re-running Hollywood films about it, most postwar productions being bleakly low-key. Like T. R. Fehrenbach's history *This Kind of War*, which called for non-conscript "legions" to fight dirty but necessary wars of containment on behalf of a flabby-minded America, some films brooded over our will to withstand a Communist enemy—a concern encouraged by reports of GI prisoners collaborating with that enemy and, very rarely, being converted to Marxism. But as time passed, the entertainment media began telling us more about contemporary bugaboos than the realities of a past war.

Robert Altman's 1970 *M*A*S*H*, the most popular film ever made about the Korean (or was it the Vietnamese?) War, regarded it as a meaningless if bloody joke. The more distressingly "sensitive" doctors of the TV series, afflicted with Woodstockian clichés and haircuts, thought nothing of packing a howitzer's breech with cement lest anyone have the bad taste to use it in defending their hospital; yet even President Reagan, in an era when old and honored Regular Army units are deactivated to serve the unfathomable needs of half-souled Pentagon bureaucrats, took due notice of the breakup of that most famous unit of all, the fictitious 4077th MASH. While it is depressing to think that the most influential vision of the Korean struggle may prove that of Alan Alda, the mere fact that some still think of it, despite its massive bloodletting, as a "small war"—let alone, in Harry Truman's ghastly phrase, a "police action"—suggests a hole in the collective memory. For once a blurb writer does not exaggerate as the dustjacket for Donald Knox's *The Korean War* proclaims that it "may well have been this country's most quickly forgotten full-scale war." This "oral history" proves a suitable shock treatment for historical amnesia, opening with American mobilization for the first uphill battles against the North Koreans and ending six months later after a seesaw of rousing success and shattering rout.

Wayne Michael Sarf is the author of God Bless You, Buffalo Bill: A Layman's Guide to History and the Western Film.

Now the notion of an "oral history" of almost anything, but particularly a war, has a curious appeal; Dee Brown even claimed his ludicrous *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* as such, despite its reliance on standard Indian Wars sources. Romantics may attribute the appeal to the origins of mankind's earliest epics, or to some "Amazing Stories"-like vision of our Cro-Magnon ancestors huddled awestruck as a sage, features dim in the firelight, tells of the mammoth-slaying heroes of the race. More credibly, we can blame our own desire to get what we hope are the facts "straight from the source," in the unaffected speech of everyday life, without the distorting intervention of historian or journalist. Who needs a Gibbon or a Macaulay—or even an Ernie Pyle or Michael Herr—when we can have Private Smith tell us the real story as he lived it?

However, replacing narrator with editor may merely throw each reader into the democratic plight of being his own historian, to sort out truth for himself—with the added disadvantage that the editor, not the reader, has after all pre-selected the informants and usually asked all the questions. Even a careful historian may ask the wrong questions, or believe the wrong answers, perhaps convinced that he alone has been vouchsafed some previously hidden truth—as was the late Dr. Thomas Marquis in crediting those wizened Cheyenne Indian veterans of the Little Bighorn fight who told him that Custer's men had actually achieved self-annihilation by shooting themselves or each other. As the Cheyennes had never revealed this tale to anyone else (including their own descendents) the good doctor doubtless felt that he, unlike other whites, had encouraged them with his open mind. Instead he seems a victim of men whose trust he thought he had earned. (Or, as one thorough student of the battle remarked to me, with some heat, "Those Cheyenne sons-of-bitches lied to him.")

Alas, there is always that problem of reliability. How can the lay reader judge contradictory testimony? Should a compiler of oral accounts attempt to resolve these contradictions for him, or use his own wisdom in letting an informant's narrative stand alone? And then what of letting those he chose to suppress speak for themselves? Sometimes data may simply be hurled at us. *Newsweek*'s Peter S. Prescott accused Peter Manso of simply publishing the *research* for his "oral biography" of Norman Mailer, dismissing Manso's excuse for reproducing, sans analysis, contradictory accounts ("One can assume there is more truth in a montage than in a monolith") as "the worst sort of baloney, an abdication of responsibility." One can also abdicate by failing to do supplemental research and/or letting an informant's fantasies take over; Merle Miller's *Plain Speaking* let Harry Truman tell of how the great captain MacArthur had kept the President waiting prior to their historic confrontation on Wake Island. It was a uniquely dramatic eyewitness account—unique in part because other eyewitnesses swore that MacArthur had done no such thing.

Modern warfare has of late been a popular subject for bestsellers titling themselves "oral histories" and illustrating the problems of the genre. Al Santoli's *Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War* featured one informant who later recanted his story of being taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. Mark Baker's *Nam* offered conveniently anonymous accounts and provoked suspicions of outright fabrication voiced by *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. Studs Terkel's

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ironically named *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War Two* was taken to task on ideological grounds for including too many left-wing witnesses, while in one televised confrontation conservative columnist Dorothy Rabinowitz (apparently unaware of how frequently such tragedies occur) questioned Terkel's motives in including an account of U.S. casualties inflicted by "friendly fire"; thus is the "self-told" ideal suspect. Prejudice may be ludicrously blatant (the statements in the *People's Almanac* oral overview of America might lead the unwary to conclude that U.S. forces in Vietnam did no fighting, confining themselves instead to committing atrocities), but even the least biased author may fail to quell suspicions that it is he, not his informants, who deals the cards—precisely the sort of intervention we seek to bypass.

Countless writers, of fiction and nonfiction, have emphasized the limited viewpoint of the individual combatant, who may know little of the "big picture" and care less. In James Webb's novel *Fields of Fire* a returning veteran, asked whether he thinks the U.S. is winning, claims that the civilian asking him probably has a better idea: "I don't know anything about it." The Vietnam war, writes Webb, "happened only to individuals, and it had ceased happening to him." How, then, to draw from individual accounts a history of mass movements involving, at the least, hundreds of thousands of fighting men? Can even the most conscientious writer really produce a true "oral history" of *any* modern war? Wisely, the attempt is rarely made; the futility of any unified narrative is underscored by the common technique of presenting collections of personal narratives, with a minimum of linking narration. If such misnamed "oral histories" multiply, it is because their value, and popularity, lie in offering the raw materials of history with an immediacy rarely matched by conventional military narratives.

If, however, an ambitious writer is even to attempt an "oral equivalent of war," or rather of an orthodox war narrative, the chosen conflict should ideally involve the same informants throughout the length of the book, unfold over a relatively brief period of time in a relatively small area, and have few controversial points to be cleared up by the possibly fading memories of the informants. The first six months of conventional fighting in Korea seem far better suited to such treatment than either the sprawling Second World War or the complex quagmire of Indochina. U.S. naval and air units, then ground troops, were thrown into battle to help feeble South Korean forces repel the overwhelming mass of the invading North Korean People's Army. Pushed back to a tiny salient at Pusan marking the extent of non-Communist power on the peninsula, they bought time with desperate fighting and terrible losses. After MacArthur's audacious amphibious assault on the sea-walled Inchon harbor, our Army's advance from Pusan, and the virtual destruction of the NKPA invasion force, United Nations forces pushed on toward the Yalu to eliminate resistance and reunify the country for elections. Crushing such hopes were countless Chinese "volunteers" who launched human-wave assaults to the sound of whistle and bugle, threatening to destroy the Americans through sheer numbers in battles fought at temperatures that destroyed flesh and jammed weapons, shattered the plastic caps of canteens, and transformed the U.S. military's airtight "shoepac" into a sweat-freezing frostbite machine. U.N. forces were driven back across the 38th Parallel in defeat, though the U.S. Marines declined to concede it ("Retreat, hell," growled Major General Oliver P. Smith. "We are just attacking in another direction") with their breakout southward from the Chosin Reservoir—bearing off not only their wounded, but their frozen dead.

The methods of Donald Knox are well suited to portraying this seesaw bloodletting. Rather than capsule biographies (undoubtedly the most practical approach for Santoli or Terkel) Knox offers us short—sometimes very short—bursts of individual memory, with some recurring informants dropping out only after being wounded or captured. The author even occasionally switches back and forth between informants so as to cover phases in the same brief action or incident—the shooting of an individual soldier, perhaps. Save for the odd Brit or Australian, presumably included for reasons of Anglophonic solidarity, Knox's war is the Americans' war, with even the South Korean KATUSAs attached to U.S. units providing no testimony. Oddly, none of Knox's informants seems to have been black, and we learn virtually nothing of that still-segregated Old Army unit, the 24th Infantry—perhaps because Knox, successfully blending individual experiences with historical panorama, follows several presumably representative combat units so tenaciously that the book might almost be subtitled "An Oral History with the 5th Cavalry and Fifth Marine Regiments."

The "oral" of the existing subtitle is sometimes winked at. Knox, employing his own interviews and others from Navy and Marine Corps history collections, skillfully unifies the narrative with his own bridgework and quotes official reports that produce a striking contrast through their very lack of color; this is not surprising. But he also uses much *written* eyewitness material, that closest to Everyman experience being the letters of various GIs. (One is forced to imagine just how their loved ones reacted to the horrors recounted therein, and just what, if any, greater horrors they thought it best to conceal.) Even journalistic war coverage is quoted at length; yet while this is undoubtedly first-hand material, does not the very professionalism of a Marguerite Higgins—an eyewitness by trade, rather than by chance interview—subvert the point? While such lapses can be shrugged off, more damaging to the book's underlying "point"—the sense of getting raw, hell-I-was-there accounts—are some edited narratives which seem all too well smoothed regarding grammar, syntax, profanity, and eloquence: "He was from a small Illinois farm town and as American as apple pie. Lean, sandyhaired, he looked like where he came from—the corn belt." Does anyone really talk like this? One is strangely grateful, in these illiterate days, to come across someone using a double negative, though this I noticed but once.

If Knox's choice of material occasionally appears—like his cryptic quoting of the last four lines of "Blenheim"—arbitrary, much of his anecdotal material remains not so much open to questions of overall historical reliability as of necessity indifferent to them. If a certain Lieutenant Greer is denounced by a former subordinate, we have only the subordinate's view to consider: was Greer still alive at the time of the interview? More seriously, we find no Army rebuttal, official or unofficial, to Marines' charges of Army units failing to hold positions and even abandoning their wounded during retreats: did Knox ask none of his Army veterans about such charges?

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Sometimes one would simply like more first-hand information about an incident, such as a briefly described action with Chinese horse cavalry. "I watched. . . . It was terribly one-sided, what with our machine guns, mortars, and artillery. Lots of screaming horses and dying Chinese; it didn't seem real." Didn't seem real, he says? All the more reason to let us know more about it! (Lest we think these revolutionaries hopelessly out-of-date, effective Chinese use of mounted troops was cited as late as 1953 in arguing that our own First Cavalry Division resume using horses.)

But Knox's book exhibits the virtues as well as the vices of the form. And its virtues are considerable. He excels in taking vigorous bites out of war's experience and, with his mass of details, conjuring up the *feeling* of these Korean campaigns as powerfully as any work could do, the more so because groups of informants share common tribulations. It is always disheartening to read that the first American units sent to hold the line were bewildered, unprepared, and poorly equipped, their rocket launchers almost useless against the enemy's T-34 tanks; but while their story can be magnificently executed by the historian, illuminated with (carefully chosen) anecdotes of courage, elation, and cowardice, the effect may remain that of a somewhat impersonal drama. Here the varied yet similarly grim experiences of the soldiers weigh more heavily, the sheer desperation of the earliest battles being most forcefully driven home:

> On the road in July, pulling back again from another blocking position, it was exactly like the day before, except now I was more tired and miserable than I'd been twenty-four hours earlier. I don't know what the official Army history says about us at this time, but I'm sure those who later recorded these events weren't around to witness the mess. We dragged along to the next position a few miles farther south. Guys, sweat soaked, shitting in their pants, not even dropping them, moved like zombies. You can't think when you're as fatigued as we were. I just sensed we were going to find another hill and be attacked, then find another hill and so forth, endlessly, forever. Where was it going to end? Weren't there any other GIs in this Army?

One also shares in the Marines' exultation as they sweep victoriously into the North Korean capital—sacking the Soviet embassy and cooking the swans of the P'yongyang zoo in Russian wine. A conventional account of the retreat from Chosin might present Marine valor, sacrifice, and discipline in conventional, perhaps inadvertently "glamorous" terms. Instead the cold, the frostbite, the overwhelming numbers of Chinese enemies are pressed upon us again and again, the big picture disappearing, as it sometimes should, into the crucible of individual experience. The deaths of comrades or even enemies strike home as they could scarcely do in a third-person narrative, reminding us of war's horrible waste even better than Knox's citation of appalling casualty figures.

We are also reminded of two philosophies at war. A Marine private described an air strike witnessed by the men of his unit. "We sat on the ground and enjoyed the show." The raid had a murderous effect, but a Corsair was destroyed and its pilot killed. "One pilot for an estimated enemy company. The odds didn't mount up. We figured we were the losers." For the Chinese leadership, of course, the "odds," and losses, seemed not to matter as they threw forth their expendable legions, including teenage boys armed only with wooden rifles tipped by real bayonets. But at times the enemy's behavior seemed less valiant or even suicidal than simply baffling. One soldier quotes a pilot overheard describing an awesome display over his radio: "You won't believe this. We've got Chinese walking five abreast. We're

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throwing everything we got in the cockpit at them and they won't break. They will not break ranks. Almost out of fuel, but we'll be back." Fortunately Knox provides another account by a lieutenant who witnessed the same (or a similar) incident: otherwise *we* might not believe it.

The Americans' view of their Communist enemies comes through in a fashion so ill-remembered in our own day that one feels peculiarly jolted into another time. Those who think of 1950s Communists chiefly as harmless victims of McCarthyism should recall their required support for the Soviet-sponsored North Koreans who were treating American captives, as well as their own people (if one can ever use this phrase with respect to Communist zealots), with a horrific brutality. Helpless or wounded Americans were doused with gasoline and set ablaze. ("Some guys still clutched letters from home.") Refugees were used as human shields for assaults on U.S. positions, and Communist massacres of civilians were not the exception, but seemingly the rule, though Knox presents no "analysis" of their policy save the comments of eyewitnesses: "Someone found out that many of the murdered were professional and business people, educators, artists, politicians, civil servants. The dead appeared to include entire families. . . ." Pfc. James Cardinal wrote home that "You can believe everything you read in American papers about how miserable the Communist leaders treat the people behind the Iron Curtain. If any American Communist ever tells me when I get home that America was the aggressor in this war I think I'll kill him on the spot." If South Korean civilians viewed the Yanks as liberating heroes, many North Koreans were even more enthusiastic as the Americans approached the Yalu.

> The civilians were so happy to see us. I was thrilled for them. They wanted to *give* us eggs and produce, not like the South Koreans, who tried to sell them to us. They lined the road in their villages, looking like they'd been relieved of a heavy burden—silent, happy, meek as lambs. I guess five years of Communist rule would do that to a people.

So much have we forgotten (or "advanced") that when the populace of Grenada reacted with equal enthusiasm to their rescue by American forces, the *New Yorker* accused Ronald Reagan of somehow having hypnotized them—for how otherwise could someone actually approve of liberation by brutal Yankee imperialists? The GIs knew better, and soldiers entering P'yongyang were disappointed at not capturing any of the North Koreans' advisers: "We really hoped we would nab the *true* Communists, the Russians." One Australian soldier found in the Soviet embassy stationery boxes containing American embassy letterheads and, perhaps afflicted with a Whittaker Chambers–like pessimism, set them ablaze. "When asked why I did this, I replied, 'I think the bastards will be back.' "

Covering only our POWs' early experiences, Knox cannot treat of Chinese "brainwashing," deprivations, psychological (and sometimes physical) torture, and forced "confessions" to absurd germ-warfare charges which still lay ahead for some. For this reason an informant's mention of the Chinese letting walking wounded prisoners return to their own lines—one of several incidents in which they released Americans for political reasons—might convey the impression that they were fundamentally more humane than their North Korean allies. They were not. (In one such incident cited by Fehrenbach, the Chinese signally failed to impress the released American with their humanity, having first shot several South Korean prisoners before his eyes.)

Needless to say, not all the brutality was on one side. While elements of the Vietnam-protest movement have promoted the notion of the American serviceman as a uniquely racist animal eager to slaughter Asians, the South Koreans—judging from the American informants here—appear to have been more brutal than their Yankee allies; a Navy chaplain even tells of civilians, some of them children, being rescued by a Marine officer as they were about to be executed as Communist "collaborators." Americans guilty of brutalities seem unmotivated by ideology (if the average GI can be said to have had one) but frequently possessed of an eye to retaliation; when no GIs volunteered to help carry a wounded North Korean officer ("Of course, no one volunteered; we had all heard about atrocities the North Koreans had participated in"), their platoon leader finally shot him with his pistol. At times prisoners were killed simply because they were too inconvenient:

> Word was passed to kill all enemy wounded. I found one Chinese curled up, lying facedown. He had a head wound shaped like a perfect pie-cut that exposed his brain. I fired into his midriff. He turned slowly and looked at me as if saying, "Why must you make me suffer more?" Although it remained a common practice on both sides, I never again killed another wounded Chinese soldier.

The most revolting anecdote tells of three Yanks who observe American tanks deliberately swerving off a road to run over several wounded North Koreans: "Emer was a hardy soul and never missed a bite of his cold hamburger. The other kid vomited all over himself." If such incidents were unfamiliar to newspaper readers—Samuel Fuller later boasted that his 1951 *The Steel Helmet*, the first film made about the war, was also criticized as the first to depict a GI gunning down an unarmed prisoner—they should help remind us that, police action or not, this was the last censored American war.

But of course, along with battles and atrocities, Knox also gives play to the incongruities and absurdities of war and military life, whether a Marine's unintended psychological-warfare effort in stupendously answering nature's call ("Leave it, Killeen. When the Chinks get up here they'll think we got giants"), the bizarre communion with "Custer and his 'long knives' " achieved by a Fifth Cavalryman during a mass rendition of "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" ("It was goofy the way I felt. . . . How could we get so caught up in all that Hollywood corn? But we did"), or even the garlic odor preceding Communist night attacks—a detail previously told to me by my Uncle Mickey, an Eighth Cavalry veteran. (He also noted—as men will sometimes note such odd details in the midst of war—the excellent condition of the Chinese corpses' teeth.)

The uncomprehending world of nonparticipants rarely puts in an appearance; more than chronology will separate most readers from these veterans. A bemused General Smith remarks, "I've tried to explain many times to people that 'Retreat, hell' business. You can't retreat or withdraw when you are surrounded." A veteran discourages thoughts of ideological motivation:

> Some little guy came around . . . asking questions. "Who are you fighting for? Why are you fighting?" Well, anytime I'm dropped off in a strange country and asked to fight the Chinese, my answer is simple. I told the guy, "I'm fighting for one thing—me!" Truman really slapped us in the face. He called Korea a police action. Here we were in Korea fighting and dying and our president says that. Some thanks. "What are you fighting for, son?" "For my life, buddy, for my life."

Knox's book ends abruptly with the Americans rallying from their defeats on the Yalu. Ahead lay other operations, the bloody but indecisive battles establishing a stalemated front, the peace talks where Communist guards threatened American delegates with submachine guns, and a truce which failed to re-establish the precise prewar boundaries of either Korea. Just a bit farther down the line lay the forgetfulness of republics. □

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PIONEERING SPACE: LIVING ON THE NEXT FRONTIER

James E. Oberg and Alcestis R. Oberg/McGraw-Hill/$16.95

Reid Buckley

Space is a forbidding environment; but it is being irreversibly invaded. Before long, it will be peopled. Skylabs and the impressive new Soviet *Mir* space station are realities of the present. Despite the horrendous immolation of *Challenger*, the shuttle program will be resumed, and one day not long off shuttles will link redoubt to redoubt, from low-orbiting geosynchronous platforms to the giant base of our moon, thence to Mars, and from Mars to the moons of Jupiter and Saturn; and then—ah, then: beyond!

Then unimaginably, frighteningly, compellingly beyond, even unto such magnitudes of distance that ties between the voyagers and Mother Earth become practically severed, children are born in galactic time, and the new breed of human being, the permanent dweller in space, feels only a vestigial romantic loyalty to the planet of his ancestors. If that.

In *Pioneering Space*, James and Alcestis Oberg make extensive use of the diaries of Russian cosmonauts, who are, of course, the recordholders for spinning around the globe (237 days). One passage by Valentin Lebedev vividly describes the strangeness of braving the threshold of the void:

> My first feeling on opening the hatch was a huge Earth and a real sense of the unreality of everything that was happening. All around was perfect silence, no sense of the speed of flight. No wind whistles in your ears, nothing weighs on you. The silence is striking. The station is frozen in space like a block. At 0620 we went into shade. The station hatch shone like an open door in a house in the countryside. All around was the dense blackness of the space night.

Space travelers experience a profound disorientation. There is no "up," there's no "down." "The universe is no longer heliocentric to the mind, or geocentric to the senses." The four points of the compass no longer provide co-ordinates for the navigator. What is North, what East? "In this universe of no bearings, the reference frame has to become anthropocentric . . ." In that weightless world the mind has a tendency to float off. "*Zeitgebers*, the physical, physiological, and social measures of time, are torn to pieces in space." There is no such thing as "night," or "day," nor are the seasons perceivable as hot or cold. "In an hour and a half," says cosmonaut Aleksandr Aleksandrov, "we travel right around the world, and time is compressed so that the minutes can cover a year."

There are, however, the unmatchable compensations. There is the view of Earth as, until now, only God the Creator has seen it, of an unsurpassable beauty. Release from the grip of gravity is the ultimate seduction. There is a poignant and beautiful recollection by one of his comrades of doomed astronaut Ronald McNair carefully assembling his saxophone: "He began a fine, very skilled, very sensitive jazz solo. As he did, he floated free in the shuttle middeck, as disembodied as the notes he played." "After the effortless agility of weightlessness," write the Obergs, "—the fulfillment of the universal human dream of flying—the returning astronauts felt increasingly oppressed by the gradually mounting sensation of weight on their arms, legs, chest, neck. . . . Don Lind, one of the scientists . . . recalls the lance of agony [that the thought of forever resuming gravity's burden] shot through his soul. 'This is how the guy must feel when he wakes up from anesthesia and discovers they've amputated his legs,' he agonized to himself. 'I'm going to feel crippled the rest of my life!' "

The gates have been flung wide. Man's inherent appetite for adventuring into the knowable unknown guarantees the early resumption of our shuttle program, the building of ever more platforms and laboratories, and one day the severing by our descendents of the solar system's umbilical cord. The technical obstacles are meantime boggling. Circadian order is distressed, as low orbiting astronauts witness sunrises and sunsets every ninety minutes or so. Crews must be supplied with renewable life support systems, with oxygen at just the right pressure and kept uncontaminated by dangerous gases, such as the carbon dioxide people exhale. They must be able to reclaim, reconstitute, or create their own air and water—to which end such devices as the EDC (Electrochemical Depolarized CO_2 Concentrator) Module have been invented.

It is wizardry, but not fun. The happy-go-lucky phrase, feeling full of "piss and vinegar," acquires a certain mordancy as *all* liquids, unsparingly, are recycled. Scientists are engaged in nothing less than inventing a microhabitat of the perpetually renewable character of Earth's megahabitat. Which is to say: aspiring to create chemically and mechanically a self-sustaining life support system that will permit the ultimate adventure, when the future *SS Enterprise* slips her galactic moorings.

Space gardens are being grown, and they will be the staff of permanent space station life, but what complex technological knots have yet to be puzzled out! Dr. Bassett Maguire, of the University of Texas, estimates that four to seven hundred pounds of water each day has to be passed through the biomass dedicated to the feeding of each human being, and it is calculated that 5,600 cubic feet of hothouse will be required per person. That's too much. The garden has to be compacted somehow, and it will have to be enclosed in its own module, attached to the space station, where plant transpiration can take place at an efficient rate.

Sustaining life in space is a major challenge: the forms of death that threaten at all times are dreadful to contemplate. A person inadvertently exposed to the vacuum of the void would die almost instantly of "hypoxia"—from lack of oxygen:

> After death, the body's water would seek to evaporate because of the absence of atmospheric pressure, causing the skin to blister all over. Some blood vessels would break, causing bruises here and there. Contrary to popular belief, the person's unprotected body would not explode, because the skin is fairly tough. It would take a few days for the water in the body to escape through the skin via evaporation. The body would thus be dried, mummified . . . it would not decay. It wouldn't even shrink much because the skeletal structure would still be intact. . . ."

If death took place as the result of a rip in the spacesuit, the "dying process" might take as long as fifteen seconds. Solar flares can inflict lethal doses of radiation. Seizures and convulsions. Hemorrhage. Gastrointestinal collapse. If the heaters fail, crews will instantly freeze solid. A break-down in the air revitalization system would bring about carbon dioxide narcosis, an atrociously painful way to die. Mechanical failures will always plague the conquest of space, their consequences appalling. There are no recalls out there. The explosion of the *Challenger* was caused by something as frivolous as a gasket made brittle by intense cold. Murphy's law is dramatically described by the Obergs in a less tragic connection:

> In full view of the controllers sixty million miles away, the debacle unfolded. Each of the Soviet Venus robot landers carried dual television cameras . . . and a long, hinged arm that was to drive a spike into the Venusian dirt. Accelerometers on the head of the spike would provide valuable geological measurements of the consistency of the soil.
>
> First the cameras were switched on, and their protective covers were jettisoned. These small metal disks sank to the ground within the camera's field of view. Then the arm, stowed in the straight-up position, was released. Down, down swung the instrumental head, carrying the years of hopes of a large team of scientists and engineers.
>
> . . . But as luck or fate would have it . . . the [spike] descended . . . right onto the discarded lens cover.
>
> After a voyage of many months and many tens of millions of miles, the . . . Venusian robot succeeded in determining the hardness of earthborn titanium.

This book is comprehensive. What makes for compatible personalities on long voyages in cramped quarters? How is decompression accomplished when travelers in whom weightlessness has degraded muscle and bone and the arteriovascular system return to earth? There is low comedy in the discussion of space toilets; there is high comedy in the contemplation of the effect of weightlessness on romance. Robot partners are being developed to perform dull and dangerous chores. Some will be designed to reproduce them-

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selves, in the process of which they will develop human-like affinities. They will mine raw materials for use on Earth, or for the purpose of creating habitable environments on moons and other planets . . .

These are rich lodes; but the ever-recurring theme that provokes the imagination most is predictions of a race of descendents who will inevitably become alienated: who will be changed in physical appearance and radically in their mindset. A new language appropriate to spaceflight is already developing, whose connotations are incomprehensible to earthlings. Thought patterns are bound to diverge, the Obergs argue. The longer people stay up in space the more likely are they to respond to different rhythms, which has a psychologically distancing effect. U.S. astronauts and Soviet cosmonauts will have increasingly much in common. Provincial allegiances tend to erode as month after month spacefarers gaze down upon Mother Earth; at such time when generations have succeeded each other on the edges of the universe itself, planetary allegiance will have dissolved.

We will find each other strange. The authors cover almost every aspect of existence in space yet never once mention religion; we may suspect they hypothesize its demise. Ethics are almost certain to undergo drastic revision respecting matters as fundamental as the sanctity of life. The very old, the chronically ill, the permanently disabled, and infants born sickly or deformed may not be tolerated. "Before long," declare the Obergs, "populations who live off Earth will have to develop their own codes of justice, their own laws, their own courts, and their own punishments." These populations will not only grow more and more different. Some "spacers" may come to abhor Earth, where gravity inhibits the least movement. "The air will be humid and foul-smelling to the Moon native. . . . Imagine a world free of mosquitoes, gnats and cockroaches, and then imagine coming back to Earth where those intrepid little vectors of filth and disease thrive."

Man must do what man was created to do: explore, conquer, and populate the cosmos. The future, however, may be as sorrowful to contemplate as it is exhilarating and exciting. "In . . . political and economic disputes, huge populations on Mars, the asteroids, the moons of Saturn and Jupiter, and all the stopping stations in between will not take their marching orders from the beautiful but by then politically insignificant third planet of the Solar System." □

BEYOND REAGAN: THE POLITICS OF UPHEAVAL

Edited by Paul Duke, and including essays and discussion by the panelists of "Washington Week in Review"
Warner Books/$9.95 paper

Tim W. Ferguson

One redeeming aspect of MacNeil/Lehrer's expansion to one hour a night on PBS is that it's knocked "Washington Week in Review" off the Friday prime-time schedule in New York. Lest you conclude that unoriginal thinking is on the run, however, here comes the book version of television's bad dinner party, available in paperback at all hours.

For nearly twenty years, this show has put a moderator and four Washington correspondents in a room and experimented with some independent variables, the week's Big Stories in Town. The dependent variable has invariably been a dose of conventional wisdom. The viewer is advised to provide his own stimuli.

The first thirty pages of Washington Week: The Book consist mainly of present and former hosts of the show patting all concerned with the production on the back. Even there, you get more than a taste of that all-too-familiar Beltway outlook. Paul Duke, moderator since 1974, retraces the ebb and flow of Washington political tides, from "the bright dreams evoked by John Kennedy's Camelot" to Gerald Ford's inability to "dispel the crisis in confidence" that gripped the republic after the awful Nixon. Jimmy Carter "foundered on economic shoals" (poor fella), but even then, "hardly anyone figured that the disillusionment was so deep that it would catapult Ronald Wilson Reagan into such a surprisingly easy conquest . . ." Well, not anyone on "Washington Week in Review," anyway: Four days before the 1980 election, staring into some of the same poll data that were turning Pat Caddell's beard half gray, half of the show's panelists even picked Carter to win. (You won't find mention of that in the book, by the way.)

But once Mr. Reagan was in, look out! "He would go for broke," Paul Duke writes. "Whether for good or ill, the President succeeded in unleashing a stunning tide of social, economic, and governmental change unparalleled since New Deal days."

Every revolution needs its Robespierrists, and as Mr. Duke informs us, "new, more ideologically committed players are running the old town." Even "Mr. Republican" Bob Taft, who fought the good fight and lost like he was supposed to, would look askance at "the zealous brand of partisanship practiced by these latter-day conservative apostles." Thank goodness the fair-minded Tip O'Neill has been around to keep things honest.

No old capital hand's account of the Reagan era would be complete without the chestnut about the 1980 victory reflecting a nostalgic longing for a simpler past when America reigned supreme, and Mr. Duke comes through with pretty much those words exactly. And, of course, he also comments on Reagan the performer. In case anyone a traffic light away from 3rd and Independence has forgotten or never bothered to notice, there is a page and a half of transcript from the press session at which Margaret Heckler was ushered out as head of the health and welfare bureaucracy and sent to Dublin to deal with yet another basket case. "The spectacle had all the trappings of a public hanging," it is said. The old showman Ron really knows how to draw a crowd!

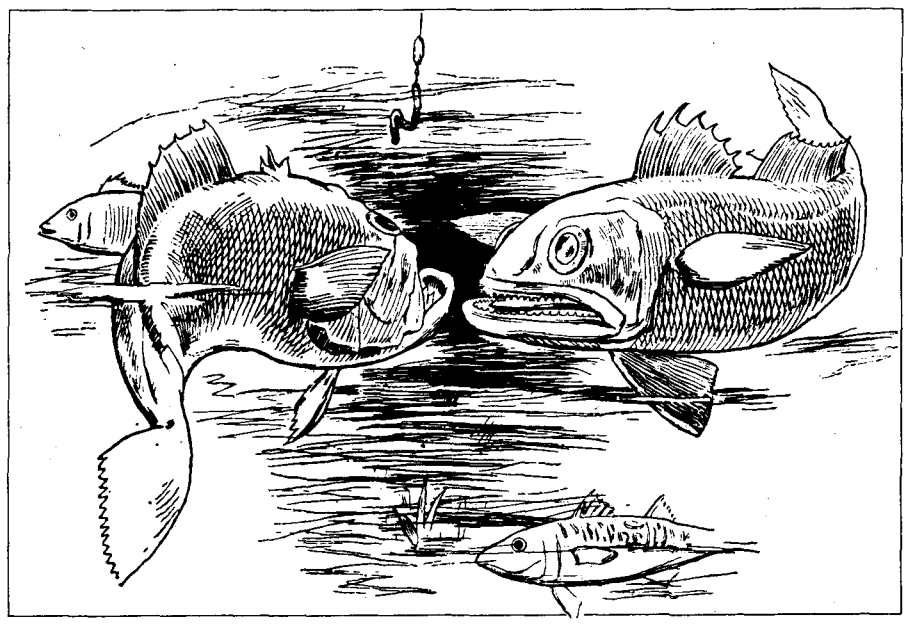
Finally, there remain throw-weighty matters for future panelists to mull: "Will Star Wars, as Reagan says, change the course of human history by rendering nuclear weapons obsolete? Or will it [you can almost hear Mr. Duke's voice drop a few octaves] mark the final stepping stone to an ever-closer Armageddon?"

After these preliminaries, the book is broken down into topical sections. In each, an essay by a regular panelist precedes a discussion that simulates the weekly gab. So this is not a collection of excerpts from the show. You're reading fresh material (in one sense).

I will admit to some surprise about the contribution from *Washington Post* correspondent Haynes Johnson. His columns for that newspaper give fuller vent to left-liberalism than most reporters are permitted in their workaday roles. Yet his overview here of the shift in political attitudes during the last generation is sufficiently cheery that Paul Duke opens the discussion section with "Haynes, you seem to come down on the side of optimism in the country." (Call the *Post* ombudsman!) After Jack Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times* sounds his usual sour note, Haynes retreats, acknowledging that "the poor and the dispossessed feel out of American society all the more." Ah, now we're back on track.

Syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer is the most pleasant breeze to blow through this program, probably because her international travels take her the farthest away from Washington. Just as the group is beginning to brood, she comes through with this:

> What Americans have not understood before is that each answer to problems causes new problems, which is what civil rights did. We talk about minorities. Are we talking about the Vietnamese minority? They are doing magnificently well. We've sifted down now to a point where it's cultural values that count in this society. . . . We're beginning to learn that there are relative answers, and I think maybe that what we're seeing under President Reagan is that a lot of Americans are think-



Tim W. Ferguson is editorial features editor of the Wall Street Journal.

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ing, well, the relative answers aren't so bad.

Shortly, however, Mr. Duke is getting antsy. Haynes, he says,

Isn't it also true that there are problems in our society today which are certain to smolder and fester and eventually explode? [Just like those combustible metaphors.] One analogy might be the Coolidge presidency, when the problems began to fester and then overwhelmed the presidency of Herbert Hoover. Even if Ronald Reagan escapes, the next presidency may suffer from today's complacency.

This is a precious Washington phenomenon. The pluckiness of the latterday Mr. Reagan has reduced his partisan critics to sounding the very sort of foreboding that so long alienated Republicans from a hopeful America. Mr. Johnson's response is therefore all the more classic:

I had lunch today with a Republican senator, and he got to talking about all this and said: "You can't understand how angry many Republicans are and how really bitter they are at the White House because we're going to be left to clean up the mess, and our necks are on the line." He said he doubted they could hold the White House after '88 because of economic problems and other frustrations.

After some more jabber about our being a "less caring society," Miss Geyer starts talking sense again, and Mr. Duke is aroused: "Are you saying that we've turned down a new road, a more conservative road, and you think we will continue going down that road?"

"Well," she replies,

I don't think conservative is the word. I think it's free enterprise, market economy, economic individualism. I think we can use new terms. I don't find the Reagan conservatives very "conservative." I do find them impassioned about economic freedom, if you want to call it that. You can call it a lot of things, but this is the way the world is going. So I can't see people going back to large social welfare.

Miss Geyer is getting rather catholic for this group, and Mr. Johnson is mounting the soapbox to put a stop to it. "I don't buy that," he retorts.

"Conservative" today doesn't mean what "conservative" did yesterday. Reagan people aren't conservatives by any measure of the American past. They're radicals. I mean, they're trying to undo the American government, not only just roll it back but cast it aside. They talk about the free market, but they want the government intruding more and more into the actions that will support their point of view, whether it's on race relations or civil rights or the Supreme Court or even the economy.

A page later, Mr. Johnson, who with Mr. Nelson saw President Carter's reelection on October 31, 1980, is looking ahead, and again courts disaster by giving a date: "I'll predict right now we're going to see a more active presidency by the end of the 1980s. The President is going to have more powers. It's going to happen because of the economy. We are not competitive and it's going to take a larger government effort, not a smaller one, to change things."

At about this point in the book, a fifth of the way through, I'll admit to tuning out, which is often what occurred when I watched the show on television, waiting for "Wall Street Week." I did like the spacy theme music of "Washington Week"; an unkind critic could suggest it heralded dialogue from another planet. Actually, that's giving the town that bills itself "the most important city in the world" too much credit. It's a smallish place, of narrowing and consuming interests. A place where the Doles, Domenicis, and Stockmans occupy themselves in such things as a "budget process," which has been of no real relevance to the Reagan presidency and the country since early 1982, and where the press follows their agonizing efforts with excruciating care. Between that subject and "arms control," another pretense, "Washington Week" has amassed enough frets and frowns to fill ten books.

It's not that these people aren't good reporters. Indeed, perhaps because they are do both the show and the book suffer. Mr. Duke makes the point that the program's creators chose to feature news journalists instead of avowed pundits, to toe the center and heap scorn on all sides as deserved. What they got was a bunch who, with an exception or two, are too close to their Washington world and yet too smug about their detachment from its wars. The result is as predictable as it is insufferable. □

WITH THE CONTRAS: A REPORTER IN THE WILDS OF NICARAGUA

Christopher Dickey/Simon and Schuster/$18.95

Steven C. Munson

During the spring debate over whether the United States should resume military aid to the anti-Communist guerrillas, called contras, in Nicaragua, White House communications director Patrick Buchanan published a column in the *Washington Post* in which he posed the following question to the Democratic members of Congress: Would they stand with the United States and the democratic resistance in Nicaragua, or with Daniel Ortega and the Communists? The column provoked an immediate outcry in Congress and the press, the theme of the complaints being that Mr. Buchanan, and by implication the administration he spoke for, was engaged in the kind of McCarthyite rhetoric not heard since the 1950s. Mr. Buchanan's critics insisted that they would not allow the Administration to frame the debate over contra aid in terms of patriotism or anti-Americanism. His attempt to do so, they said, was not only morally offensive but unfair as well.

In denouncing Mr. Buchanan, these critics sought to quash any suggestion that their opposition to aiding the anti-Communists in Nicaragua might have anything to do with their attitude toward their own country. This particular suspicion, however, is not easily laid to rest. Over the past five years, a good deal has happened in Nicaragua that was not expected when the Sandinistas marched into Managua in the summer of 1979. Their revolution, like so many before it, was heralded as a new beginning for a long-oppressed people. Yet the Sandinista revolution, like so many before it, turned out to be the beginning of the end of freedom, prosperity, and hope. Today Nicaragua is in the process of becoming a full-fledged totalitarian Communist state on the Soviet-Cuban model. Freedom of the press has been abolished. Religious freedom—preeminently in the form of the Catholic Church—is gradually being snuffed out. The Miskito Indians and other indigenous peoples have been relocated and brutally persecuted. Education has been replaced by propaganda. The economy is being destroyed, the people impoverished. Allied to the Soviet Union and thoroughly militarized, the country is now in the hands of foreigners, from Libyans and East Germans to Cubans and the PLO.

All of this is now more or less accepted in the United States by all but the most dedicated proponents of Communist revolution and their fellow-travelers. Today even those who travel under the name liberal recognize that Nicaragua is not a nice place. Yet while the unpleasant facts about the country and its course have for the most part been acknowledged, the implications those facts hold for American policy have been resolutely resisted.

At issue today, as in the early years of the Reagan Administration, is the simple question of whether the United States should do anything to obstruct or weaken the Sandinista government. Five years ago, the question turned primarily on Nicaragua's efforts to export its revolution by arming and otherwise assisting the Communist guerrillas in El Salvador. At the first sign that the United States might actually try to cut off this support, opponents demanded evidence of Nicaragua's subversive activity. Soon the issue was no longer what we should do about Sandinista aggression, but whether our own government was lying when it called attention to that aggression.

Today, few would dispute that the Sandinistas were and are trying to export their revolution, and not only to El Salvador but to other Latin American countries as well. Yet that recognition has not led to a widespread readiness to trust the Reagan Administration. On the contrary, the Administration is now held responsible for the policies of the Sandinistas. The argument is advanced that the Sandinistas have been driven to take extreme measures, both at home and abroad, by the hostility of the United States.

This is the thesis of Christopher Dickey's widely praised book, *With the Contras*. A reporter for the *Washington Post* now stationed in the Middle East, Mr. Dickey spent several years covering Central America. Part of the book details his brief experience traveling in Nicaragua with one unit of anti-Communist guerrillas. The rest is a sketchy recounting of the Sandinista revolution, the fall of Somoza, and the creation of the contra army.

Mr. Dickey depicts the contra forces as the product of a sinister conspiracy among U.S., Argentine, and other Latin American intelligence and military officials. He tells the story of one contra unit led by a former Somoza national guardsman called "Suicida." It is an

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ominous and murky tale of psychotic killers who perpetrate atrocities against Nicaraguan civilians, enjoy torturing Sandinista prisoners, and in the end turn their uncontrollable lust for violence against each other. Mr. Dickey presents his case history as an analogue of the My Lai episode in Vietnam, and he suggests that just as My Lai epitomized the immorality of the American war effort in Vietnam, so too does "Suicida" represent the immorality of the contra war in Nicaragua. He also portrays the contras as a pathetically ineffective fighting force that cannot win the support of the people of Nicaragua or seriously threaten the Sandinista government.

But behind the contras, Mr. Dickey tells us, stands the United States. In his view, by creating the contras the United States gave the Sandinistas a reason and a pretext to move steadily into the Soviet orbit. Because the United States is out to destroy them, writes Mr. Dickey, the Sandinistas have had to get Soviet rifles, Soviet anti-aircraft batteries, and Soviet attack helicopters. They have had to build a major new military air base. They have had to become "a power the likes of which Central America [has] never seen. . . . a match for any of Washington's allies in the area, and potentially for all of them combined."

Apart from having left the Sandinistas no choice but to throw in with the Soviet Union and arm themselves to the teeth, argues Mr. Dickey, U.S. support for the contras has also forced the Sandinistas to oppress and terrorize their own citizens. It was only after the contras started their attacks, he insists, that the Nicaraguan people first began to feel the Sandinista boot upon their necks. Nor, he suggests, would the Sandinistas be trying to export their revolution to the rest of Latin America if we weren't trying to overthrow them with the contras. In his words, "by trying to help others," the Sandinistas have only "continued to defend their own revolution."

Mr. Dickey shares the conventional view that the revolution was a genuine popular response to decades of economic, political, and military repression. Despite all that has happened to Nicaragua since 1979, the revolution, as Mr. Dickey sees it, remains legitimate. More than once he reminds us of the years Tomas Borge and the rest of the Sandinista leadership spent in Somoza's jails. That experience is apparently what earns them Mr. Dickey's respect, tinged with his admiration. He shows no such regard for Eden Pastora, the non-Communist, social-democratic Nicaraguan revolutionary who broke with the Sandinistas after they took power, and who had never been in Somoza's jails. But Mr. Dickey does tell the story of Pastora's part in making the revolution. In so doing, he unwittingly unravels the argument of his book.

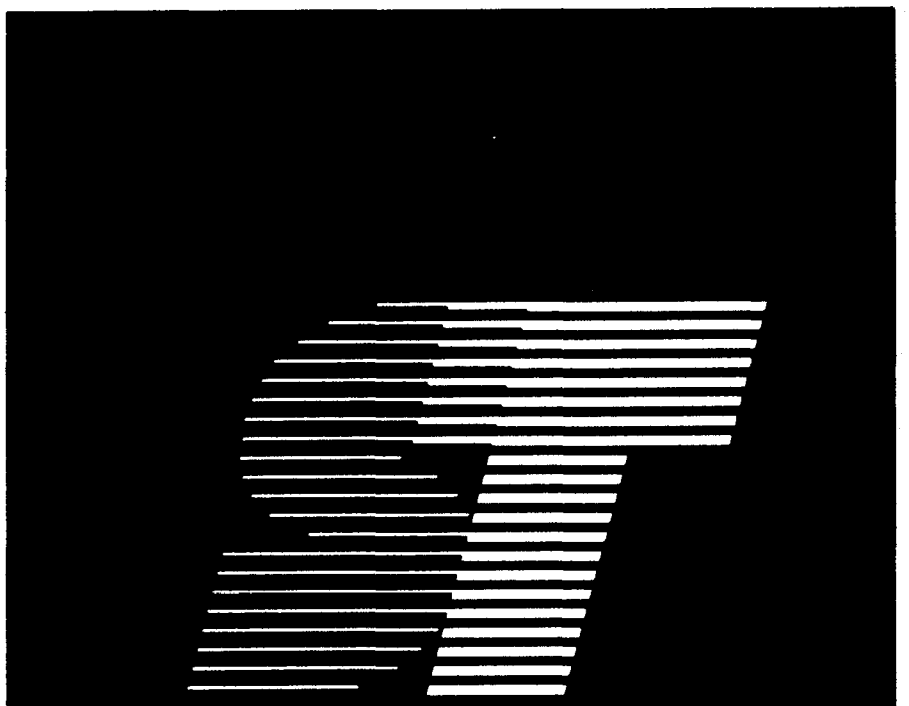
He makes it quite clear that long before there were any contras, or for that matter a Reagan Administration, the Sandinistas had become ideological Marxist-Leninists dedicated to establishing a Communist state in Nicaragua and other countries besides. By his account, the Sandinistas succeeded after twenty years of failure because in the end they hit upon the popular front—the classic strategy by which Communists make common cause with democratic political groups. The key to their strategy was Eden Pastora. Although he had fallen out with the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the early 1970s, in 1977 he was called back by Daniel and Humberto Ortega. They presented him "with a plan to join forces with businessmen and landowners, Conservative party leaders—all the people the other revolutionaries scorned but whom he knew so well." Pastora agreed, and after the murder of popular newspaper editor Pedro Chamorro galvanized the respectable, middle-class opposition to Somoza, "the new 'democratic' face of the revolution paid off." Guns began to flow in from democratic countries like Costa Rica and Venezuela. Two years later, the Sandinistas had taken Managua and Somoza had fled.

Afterwards it became clear that Pastora had been used all along by the Communists who controlled the FSLN to manipulate the democratic opposition to Somoza, both inside and outside the country. It also became clear that the Sandinista National Liberation Front was by no means a nationalist movement. "Some had lent themselves to Chile's attempt at democratic revolution [i.e., supported the Marxist government of Salvador Allende]. Others had trained with Palestinians in the Middle East. Still others, led by Tomas Borge, had plotted and trained in Cuba." Mr. Dickey gives a fuller portrait of the international revolutionary alliance to which the Sandinistas belong when he describes the scene in Managua after their triumph:

> A world of exiles had arrived in the first hours. Some had fought alongside the troops. . . . Some had been in the background advising. Chileans . . . had fought the fight against Somoza that they had lost against Pinochet. . . . There were three full columns of Argentine *moñtenero* guerrillas and support personnel, and members of the Argentine Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) had helped the Sandinistas run their intelligence apparatus. . . . There were Cubans. There were Palestinians. There were guerrillas from El Salvador looking, now, to pursue their own war at home. . . . This was the first great battle for the revolution which had been won in twenty years. It had been two decades since Fidel marched into Havana. . . . Now other capitals seemed certain to follow. The internationalists saw this as part of their own struggle. They had lost their battles, but they had survived and they would soon go home again. Nicaragua was the first step toward their return. All they had to do was make it work.

Although he has no trouble reporting these facts, Mr. Dickey seems unable to grasp what they mean: that the Sandinistas have long been an arm of what used to be called international Communism. Nor does he seem capable of understanding that the Sandinistas' Marxist ideology has something—indeed everything—to do with their behavior. This failure of perception leads him, like many other observers, to conclude that the Nicaraguan revolution has gone sour, when in fact, from the point of view of the Sandinistas and their closest friends, it has so far worked very well. The earmarks of that success—the gradual extension of total Sandinista political control through the abolition of civil liberties and the creation of widespread economic misery; the massive military build-up far in excess of any reasonable defense needs; the partnership with the Soviet Union; the subversion of non-Communist neighbors—are plainly visible and they have nothing to do with the contras or the actions of the United States. The Sandinistas are turning Nicaragua into another Cuba because they are Communists, and like other Communists in power, they are totalitarian at home and expansionist abroad.

Mr. Dickey refuses to accept this fact, choosing instead to absolve the Sandinistas for what they have done to their country (and what they would like to do to others) and to place the blame for Nicaragua's woes on the United States. Against all reason and evidence



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he embraces the idea that but for U.S. policies Nicaragua under the Sandinistas might today be a peaceful, democratic country. Against all common moral sense, he opposes those Nicaraguans who have chosen to resist the Sandinista government. Mr. Dickey clings to the idea that the contras have little support among the people of Nicaragua. Yet he himself reports that "the Sandinista strategies that had alienated so many of the mountain people since the 1982 state of emergency had grown more severe and ever more onerous. By the spring of 1985 they included planned relocations of tens of thousands of the independent farmers in the Segovias, and again the contra ranks were swelled." He also met guerrillas who told him that, faced with conscription into the Sandinista army, they chose to join the contras instead. When it comes right down to it, in other words, many young Nicaraguan men prefer to fight against the Sandinistas rather than for them.

Today the contras number about 20,000 and their ranks continue to grow. Their political leaders include Arturo Cruz, Adolfo Calero, and Alfonso Robelo, leading democratic opponents of Somoza who, like Eden Pastora, tried to work with the Sandinistas and found they could not. Now that they have gone into opposition to the Sandinistas, these same men who were regarded as authentic spokesmen for democracy when they opposed Somoza have been reduced by Mr. Dickey to "the chosen front-men of the CIA," called upon only to present the contras as something other than a bunch of killers.

Mr. Dickey is convinced that the incidents involving "Suicida" have forever discredited the contras and their American backers. But he also describes what happened after "Suicida's" final rampage: The contras undertook an investigation, held what amounted to a trial for war crimes, and promptly executed "Suicida" and his top lieutenants and dismissed a number of higher-ups. In this matter, too, Mr. Dickey fails to understand the meaning of what he has reported: that "Suicida" was an aberration of the kind that occurs in wars fought by men who, because they are democrats, apply rules of conduct designed to protect innocents and punish transgressors. Like My Lai, "Suicida" was an isolated case. Its outcome, far from undercutting the moral argument for the contras, actually strengthens it.

Mr. Dickey is far from alone in failing to appreciate that argument and the efforts of the United States to keep alive the hopes for democracy in Nicaragua. Like so many others of position in our political and cultural life, he seems unaware of the deep hostility to the United States that pervades his thinking. In the last forty years, there has been no more clear-cut case where American intervention was called for than Nicaragua after 1979. Having helped topple the Somoza government, we bear some responsibility for the fact that the country is now in Communist hands. The least we are obliged to do—leaving aside for the moment our own strategic interest in keeping Nicaragua and Central America from becoming a Soviet base—is to assist those who have asked for our help in getting rid of the Sandinistas. Yet even this small commitment of American power is too much for Mr. Dickey, and the many people who share his point of view, to accept or even acquiesce in. They feel they must actively oppose it. Rather than give their blessing to the use of American power, they will go so far as to stand against the democratic side in a two-way struggle with tyranny. That they cry McCarthyism when their position is called into question only shows that, having made their choice, they do not wish to take responsibility for it, or live with its consequences. Yet live with those consequences they must. Unfortunately, so must the rest of us, including the people of Nicaragua. ☐

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THE RISE AND FALL OF NEW YORK CITY

Roger Starr/Basic Books/$17.95

Robert Nisbet

On February 12, 1946, Lincoln's birthday, the Mayor of the City of New York, William O'Dwyer, ordered the citizens to knock off ordinary holiday activities and assist him in effectively closing down the city. It was the Mayor's response to a potentially devastating strike by the tugboat workers, those who brought to Greater New York vital fuels such as oil and coal. The strike had been under way for more than a week, and at the height of winter the fuel situation was becoming critical. Hence the Mayor's bold act of resistance to the strikers. "In his emergency proclamation, the mayor gave only the sketchiest justification for his action, probably because there was no balance sheet on which the savings of fuel could be quantified and related directly to the strike. . . . The fact that the people of the city took the mayor's order in stride, obeyed it, and for the most part did not complain about its interference with their plans may have helped direct O'Dwyer's action to its target. The strike ended within a day."

That is Roger Starr's arresting beginning of his book. From it the rest of the book follows as logically as it does sequentially. How, he asks, do we account for the melancholy decline of New York and of the relation between citizens and government symbolized on Lincoln's Birthday, 1946; decline to such an ugly state as that on July 13, 1977 when in the great blackout that hit the city suddenly at night, large sections were vandalized, looted, and turned into virtual war zones, with 4,500 people arrested for a spectrum of misdemeanors and crimes? "Black leaders accused the administration of inhuman treatment. Civil rights leaders agreed. The incident heated racial strife."

The author continues: "New Yorkers in 1977 had clearly changed since the strike of 1946 had drawn them together into unified action, and so had the city of New York itself." How and why New York and its citizens had changed so drastically is the subject of Roger Starr's engrossing and captivating book. His style is fully up to the drama contained, and there is the same kind of coiled, taut tension from chapter to chapter that one finds in the best of novels.

The impact of the book is enhanced when we know that its author is a renowned urban scholar and administrator, one of the anointed few indeed who brought the study of housing into its deserved prominence just after World War II. He served as Commissioner of Housing and Development under Mayor Beame when the city underwent its fiscal agonies in the 1970s. Himself a life-long resident of New York, currently a member of the editorial board of the *New York Times*, as aware of national currents as those of local origin, Starr is cut to order for this book. Its larger importance lies in the fact that it is a morality story for Americans, not just New Yorkers. The only phrase in all of Marx's *Capital* that I know by heart is *De te fabula narratur*, in which Marx assures his readers that his depiction of the coming agonies of English capitalism is meant for Germans and French as well as the English. Happily, Roger Starr is a great deal more perceptive, and a great deal less befuddled by metaphysics, than Marx was. His book falls in the genre of tragedy, but it is in no sense mere Spenglerian exfoliation; the tragedy Starr presents us with comes straight from the political, economic, and cultural history of New York during the last forty years.

In 1946, New York was without doubt the most favored great city in the world. It had profited from the war, but unlike London, Paris, Berlin, and other European capitals, it was unscarred by any of the grim toll of war. From war New York had drawn not only economic prosperity but a strong sense of the human bond. Hence the alacrity and grace with which the people responded to the Mayor O'Dwyer's order. A quotation from the *New Yorker* serves Starr piquantly and pertinently: "It was indeed . . . a feast day . . . and we spent it as if we were under the equivalent not of Martial Law but of the Mardi Gras."

But New York had a good deal more than the glow of triumphant war behind its well-being in 1946. As Starr points out in detail, New York was as rich in urban assets, the kinds of assets which we almost invariably find associated with the great cities in world history, as it had ever been in its spectacular history. Geography served it well; its harbor was among the best and the busiest anywhere. It had, in 1946, perhaps the finest transportation to be found in any of the largest cities in the world. Train, subway, bus, tunnel, bridge, private automobile, taxi combined to "concentrate millions of workers in the central business district every day and get them home at night." Third, the city had a high quality population; that is, possessed of virtually every talent or skill known to man, a population that was buttressed by a public school system rated among the very best in the country. Fourth—and this may evoke sobs among readers—there was a very large housing supply; enough affordable housing to give New York that most precious of demographic treasures: a large and proud middle class. A fifth asset was—again reader, prepare yourself here—the lawfulness of the city. "At the end of 1945 the annual report of the Department of Correction noted that the city's prison population was below .1 (one-tenth of one percent) of the total population. Its 20,000-member police force was quite professional by American standards, and its criminal justice system worked well. More important, even, was the extent to which the population voluntarily complied with the laws governing such minor offenses as smoking on public transportation facilities or committing nuisances in the streets."

Other assets possessed by the city included its health system, foremost in the world, one built of public hospitals and clinics and buttressed by a network of voluntary and proprietary health institutions; its world famous opera and symphony, its museums, universities, baseball teams, publishing houses of magazines as well as books, its newspapers, and so on and on.

Not to be overlooked either for a moment is perhaps the single most decisive asset then held by New York: its manufacturing importance. No great city in history has ever appeared or maintained itself except under the impress of commerce, trade, and manufacture. It is hard to remember today that down until the immediate postwar period, New York City ranked with Chicago and Detroit as a manufacturing city. Factories by the thousand were dotted all over Greater New York. Starr writes: "The presence of so much manufacturing helped to insure the city against the risks of concentrating its labor force in the service sector. . . . At the end of the war, New York added more value to manufactured products than any other American city, including Detroit and Pittsburgh."

Now to the decline and fall of one of the world's greatest cities—still a great city but diminished all the same in every single one of the respects just cited here from Starr's account. Its manufacturing rampart began to crumble almost immediately. The city lost 600,000 factory jobs during the ten years that followed the war. "New York, in fact, was the only factory town in the nation that could lose 600,000 jobs and still retain 600,000 people working in factories." Neighborhood associations, environmental groups, lawyers, and politicians on the make began to find it intoxicating work to beat down the factory system. New York intellectuals, needless to stress, were well prepared ideologically for the work of capitalist destruction.

From decrease in jobs came inevitable decrease in the work-related transportation system, especially the remarkable subway. Efforts to rationalize the system by cutting out stations were met fiercely by many of the same people who were at work expelling industry, but in the name of minority rights rather than idyllic socialism. To remove a station invited the instant cry of discrimination against blacks or Hispanics, whose pride would be hurt and opportunities reduced. But smaller crowds of riders in subways meant greater space and opportunity for crime, especially violent crime, to flourish. People fear the subway today, and that just may be the single largest, most haunting fact in the whole saga. As Starr notes, fear is legitimately generated by the crime rates, which in

Robert Nisbet is an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His most recent book is Conservatism: Dream and Reality *(University of Minnesota Press).*

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turn are generated by the loss of ridership. "But the number of riders will not increase until passengers feel safe. That's known as a vicious circle."

Housing shortages are of course notorious and in their varied configurations are like cancers. The very rich are unbothered of course. And in a grim, revolting sort of way, the very poor, the indigent and homeless, are also taken care of. But no one, I think, would suggest that the middle class, the historic foundation of all great urban populations in history, is anything but beleaguered and perpetually endangered. There are many causes of this signal degeneration in New York's recent history, but as Roger Starr stresses, by far the largest, and by now nearly ineradicable, of causes is rent control. New York, we learn, is the only American city that has had rent control continuously since World War II, and that knowledge is made ironic, if not tragic, by the further information that New York was one of the very last cities to be caught up in the toils of federally mandated wartime rent control; with any luck at all, the city could have escaped it. Now only the rashest would dare even hope for extrication.

There are no real villains in this book. None are needed. The harm that good men do has been ample: the city never at a loss for eager, pious, nobly intentioned politicians, administrators, foundation executives, and all-purpose intellectuals ready on a moment's notice to place the label of "suffering situation" (the phrase is Kenneth Minogue's) on whole aggregates of people and to spare no effort in coming up with solutions on the grand scale, to be underwritten of course by the taxpayers.

One of the special merits of this book is the author's deft treatment of the artistic world and its correlative encouragement of political and social decay through consciousness-raising—in theatre, museum, foundation, and university. Ordinary problems of civil order became invested overnight with apocalyptic calls to revolution and liberation of the psyche. Not even painting and sculpture were spared such ideological frenzy:

> It would surely be overreaching to suggest that the spirit of nonobjective art forced New York into its financial difficulties of 1975, or that it continues to hold before the city the specter of other severe difficulties that it may face in the future. But it is not overreaching to suggest that when the institutional leaders of the city make modern painting and sculpture their most prized art form . . . they demonstrate a set of values that endangers those needed to keep an urban polity on a firm, reasonable, and safe course.

In his acute recognition of the timeless relations between art and society—and society's essential values and bonds—Roger Starr thus joins such recent, powerful critics as Tom Wolfe and Edward Banfield. One need go no farther than the trash in iron and rust that now welcomes the world to the Federal Plaza. It is, may I say, the iron test of whether art serves man or man serves art. Art began to replace religion about a hundred years ago in America as the chief haven of the sacred. Art has even yet a way to go, but it's hard to conclude other than that it like religion will become as often the lair of tyranny as of liberation in the future. The current shameless, cowardly abdication of intellectual authority by artists and art critics, in the name of human freedom and of the precious, divine soul of the artist however inept and vulgar, offers no encouragement at all, either to New York or the rest of the country.

As I suggested above, Roger Starr's fascinating book is about a great deal more than its most visible subject, that is, New York City. It is a picture of the processes, forces, and passions which are to be found in almost every major city at the present time—even in the larger national polity. □

The Unelected Lawmakers

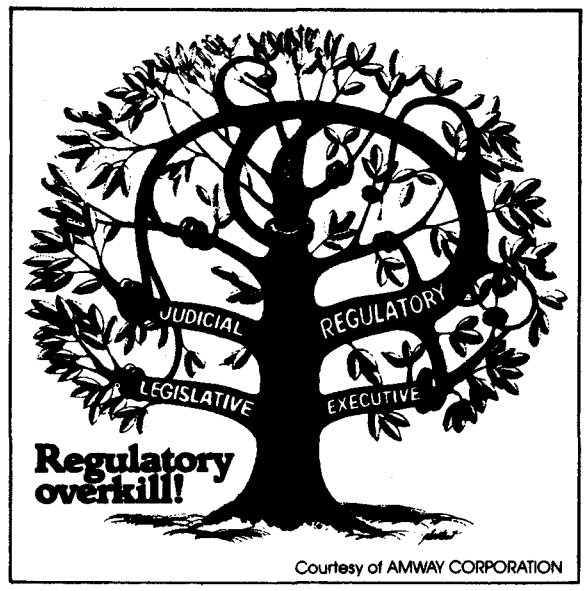
The textbooks will tell you, and most people believe, that Congress makes our laws. But experience suggests otherwise.

For example, the legislation which created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was about 30 pages long. The regulations pumped out by the new agency ran to more than 800 pages, defining more than 4000 standards for achieving safety in the workplace and on the farm (including the warning to farmers, "Don't fall into manure pits").

Add to OSHA the FPC, SEC, FCC, EPA, CPSC, EEOC, FDA, ICC, FRA, FTC—over 130 agencies in all—and you begin to wonder who really makes our laws. Moreover, these agencies often enforce their laws and even settle disputes. In other words, they are all three branches of government rolled into one.

Approximately 150,000 bureaucrats, working deep in the bowels of the federal regulatory establishment, rule on everything from drug safety to the size of toilet partitions in public restrooms. The average fast-food hamburger, it has been determined, is subject to over 41,000 state and federal regulations, right down to the thickness of the pickle slices.

This mammoth bureaucracy has grown at an alarming rate. Between 1970 and 1979, 20 new regulatory agencies were created, the number of bureaucrats tripled, and expenditures grew six-fold. The Federal Register, which annually records all the new regulations which emanate from these agencies, grew from about



The branch that's threatening the tree.

22,000 pages in 1970 to 77,000 pages by the end of the decade.

In 1980, it cost taxpayers $8 billion merely to operate these agencies. More significant, it is estimated that the cost of complying with their dictates was a staggering $130 billion. And, of course, the consumer ultimately bore this cost, about $2,500 per family, in the increased price of goods and services.

No doubt, these people mean well and some good has come of their efforts. But so has a great deal of time and money been spent to comply with meddlesome and counterproductive regulations. It's time we weighed the benefits of regulation against costs. And decisions of this magnitude should again be made by elected representatives who are regularly accountable to taxpayers at the ballot box.

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HEROES AND HUSTLERS, HARD HATS AND HOLY MEN: INSIDE THE NEW ISRAEL

Ze'ev Chafets/William Morrow/$17.95

Joseph Shattan

As readers of this journal doubtless know, the Puritan pioneers who came to the New World strongly identified with the Old Testament and its people. They called their new land Canaan, cultivated a knowledge of Hebrew (it was not until 1787 that Harvard undergraduates were excused from compulsory Hebrew study) and regarded themselves as "the Israel of our time." And being so thoroughly steeped in the Bible and its lore, it occurred to a number of them that perhaps it wouldn't be such a bad idea if the old Israel were reestablished. "For I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation," declared John Adams toward the end of his life. "Once restored to an independent government and no longer persecuted they would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character, possibly in time becoming liberal Unitarian Christians."

Judging from Ze'ev Chafets's very entertaining study, *Heroes and Hustlers, Hard Hats and Holy Men: Inside the New Israel*, while the possibility of modern Israelis embracing Unitarianism *en masse* is remote, it cannot be excluded altogether. For having gone from "a high-spirited adolescent" in 1967 to a "brooding, introspective young adult" today, Israel in its late thirties "is still a nation that doesn't know what it wants to be when it grows up." In Michigan-born Chafets, who emigrated to Israel in 1967, became director of the Government Press Office in 1977, and is himself in his late thirties, this "brooding, introspective young adult" has clearly found a most talented and perceptive biographer.

When Chafets arrived in Israel in the summer of 1967, it seemed to him a shining city on a hill, inhabited by larger-than-life heroes and prophets. "The Israelis believed their own legend that summer," he recalls. In the aftermath of the Six Day War, "there was a palpable sense of making not just history, but ancient history; of somehow rewriting a badly written page in the annals of the Jewish people." This was the "Era of High Certitude" in modern Israeli history.

Yet even in the excitement of those heady days, certain features of Israeli life grated on Chafets's nerves. The first time he turned on the radio, for example, and heard Patti Page's rendition of "Where Will My Baby's Dimple Be?" he "couldn't help thinking that there was something seriously wrong with a country whose national radio would play such a song . . . over and over." Even more upsetting was the extent of the Labor government's control not only over the economy, but over Israel's cultural life:

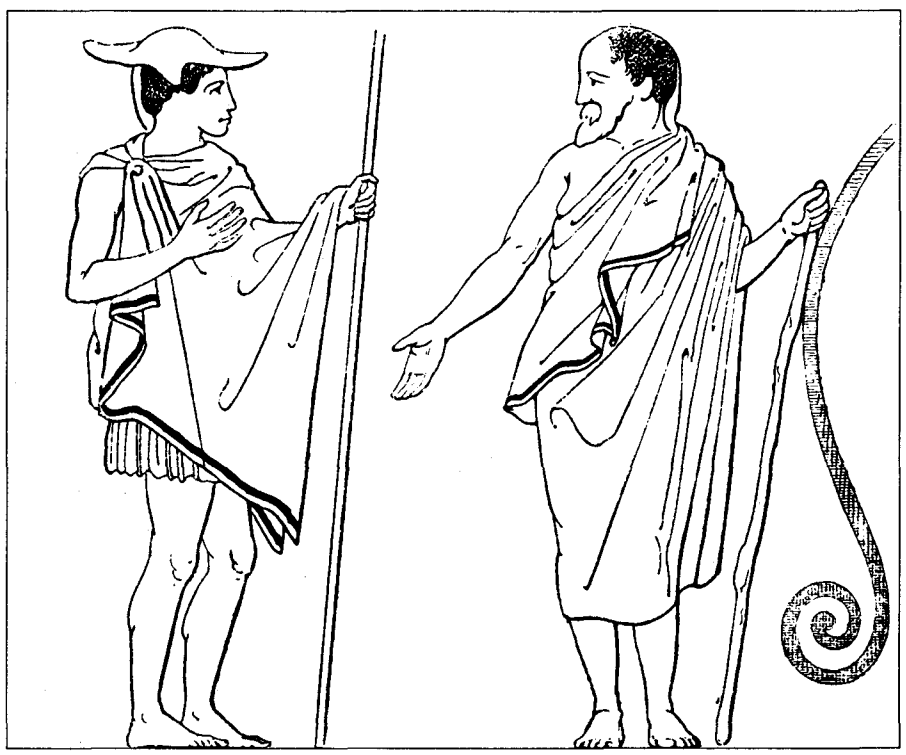
> I had never encountered anything remotely like this kind of government control. I was astonished, for example, to find that Israel had no television. For me, the absence of TV was disorienting, as if some vital natural element was missing, and I found the reason for it somewhat chilling. The government, it seemed, considered television a bad influence and, until 1968, simply refused to allow it. Even when television was finally introduced, the [Labor] leaders saw to it that its broadcast day would end at 11:00 p.m., to make sure that the workers didn't stay up till all hours of the night.

But perhaps Chafets's most startling experience occurred during his conversations with a sabra (native-born) physics student named Yisrael, who lived next door in the student dorm at the Hebrew University. It was during one such conversation that Yisrael informed Chafets that, as an American Jew, he was excellent "human material":

> This phrase, as Yisrael explained it, stood for a system of human quality control, in which each group of Jews was assigned a collective value. Romanians were "healthy but untrustworthy," Yemenites "hard-working but primitive" and so on. These evaluations were apparently self-evident (and, as I later learned, almost universally accepted among the sabra elite) and, as presented by Yisrael, they seemed as absolute as the elements on the periodic table. He was prepared to concede that there might be variations and exceptions within each group, but these were essentially irrelevant; what mattered was that the various communities could be classified, and that each constituted a type of human clay that could be molded with lesser or greater difficulty into the building blocks for the new country.

Eventually it dawned on Chafets that Israel was an "ideological creation," a product of the "flinty Hebrew Calvinism" of the Labor-Zionist pioneers. Faced with a mass of newly arrived immigrants from all over the world, these pioneers—now the leaders of a fledgling state—set about an "audacious undertaking: to transform [the immigrants]—or at least their children—into Real Israelis. The entire country became a laboratory for turning diaspora dross into Israeli gold, with the pioneer veterans and their sabra sons serving as the alchemists."

Chafets's description of the "audacious undertaking" of the Israeli pioneers bears a striking resemblance to an earlier experiment in social engineering: Plato's *Republic*. True enough, Chafets never actually cites the *Republic*. Nonetheless, to anyone who knows his Plato, much of what Chafets says about the views of Israel's Founders is uncannily reminiscent of the attitudes and practices of the Guardians and Auxiliaries, who collectively formed the Republic's Ruling Class.



Consider, to begin with, the matter of life-style. Plato believed that the Guardians should live disciplined, self-denying lives in common barracks, sharing meals, clothing, and food. They were to own no private property, and their children were to be brought up communally. Although this austere ideal has nowhere been fully realized, perhaps the nearest the world has come to it is on the Israeli kibbutz. What makes the kibbutz so unusual is not simply its communal aspect (many such communes exist throughout the world), but the fact that, especially during the fifties and sixties, a disproportionately large number of Israel's political and military elite were drawn from these *kibbutzim*, and returned to them at the close of their careers. Especially noteworthy is the case of Israel's Grand Old Man, the late David Ben-Gurion, who retired from the prime ministership to Sde Boker, a pioneering kibbutz in the Negev desert. It may not be entirely coincidental that one of Ben-Gurion's favorite philosophers was Plato, and that, in late middle age, Ben-Gurion actually learned ancient Greek in order to read his beloved Plato in the original.

But the resemblance between Israel's Founders and Plato's Guardians extends well beyond life-styles, and touches upon fundamental attitudes toward the individual and the state. Taking their cue from the Declaration of Independence, most Americans believe that the state exists to serve the individual, to help secure his "inalienable rights." Plato's Guardians, on the other hand, were raised from childhood to subordinate themselves to the state, to regard selfless service to the community as the highest good. And it is with Plato's Guardians, rather than with exponents of American individualism, that Israel's Founders shared a common ethos. This ethos was eloquently expressed by Joseph Trumpeldor, an early settler who died defending the northern frontier:

> Is there a wheel lacking? I am that wheel. Nails, screws, a block? Take me. Must the land be dug? I will dig it. Is there shooting to be done, soldiers needed? I will enlist. Policemen, doctors, lawyers, teachers, water-carriers? If you please, I am ready to do all. I am not a person. I am the pure embodiment of service, prepared for everything. I have no ties. I know only one command: Build.

Plato could not have put it any better.

Joseph Shattan, a frequent contributor, is a writer living in Washington, D.C.

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A key task of the Guardians was to protect all classes from the beguiling attractions of poets, musicians, dramatists, and painters. Plato wanted to ban Homer because he depicted the gods as immoral, and he also sought to censor what he regarded as the effeminate harmonies of certain musicians. Similarly, Israel's Founders not only tried to keep TV out of the country, but also established public committees to approve or censor films, plays, and other forms of entertainment.

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Of course, Plato's entire system of government was predicated on the belief that the Guardians really knew what they were doing. His view is summarized in the Myth of the Metals, according to which those who rule are "golden" men who rightfully deserve to govern lesser men of "silver" and "bronze." But since a "silver" child is occasionally born of "golden" parents, or a "golden" child of "silver" parents, Guardians are charged, in Plato's words, "to let nothing else play a more important role in their work . . . than the concern and scrutiny they devote to the admixture of metals in the souls of their children."

The Labor-Zionist equivalent of the Myth of the Metals was the Myth of the Real Israeli, according to which becoming a Real Israeli meant shedding the psychological characteristics acquired in the diaspora—Adams's "asperities and peculiarities"—and accepting the values of the pioneers who founded the state and established its institutions. And why was becoming a Real Israeli so important? "Simply put," answers Chafets, "these people knew what they were doing; their way worked. . . . The white-maned revolutionaries produced a generation of Hebrew warriors, personified by the golden Moshe Dayan, and in 1967 this generation had won an almost mythical victory over Israel's enemies." Spotting the proper "human material" from which Real Israelis might be fashioned was therefore just as important to Israel's Founders as determining "the admixture of metals in the souls of their children" was to Plato's Guardians. And just as Plato's Republic was made up of a minority of Guardians and Auxiliaries, on the one hand, and a majority of Producers, on the other, so was Israel divided between a minority of Real Israelis, and a majority of ordinary Jews. Curiously, all this seemed both just and natural.

As in a classical Greek tragedy, however, in which the protagonist is an admirable man brought down by some fatal flaw of character, so too were the "Real Israelis" brought down by their overweening self-confidence, their *hubris*. The occasion of their downfall was the Yom Kippur War of 1973. "The war was not supposed to have happened in the first place," Chafets writes. "Moshe Dayan and the generals had assured the country that it would not, and in the Era of High Certitude that was enough." But the generals were wrong, and in the early days of the war they seemed just as confused and ineffective as the politicians. In the end, says Chafets, the Yom Kippur War became

> the war of the little guys. . . . The heroes were the privates and sergeants and junior officers—most of them civilian reservists—who stopped the Arab advance on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts. When the fighting ended and people had a chance to look around, they realized that they had been alone, and that the fathers and mothers and glorious big brothers of the pioneer elite had failed, for the first time, to provide any inspiration or leadership.

Overnight, as it were, there were no longer any Real Israelis; instead, everyone became a real Israeli.

With the downfall of the Labor-Zionist patriciate, the Jews who immigrated to Israel from North Africa and the Middle East—the so-called Orientals or *Sephardim*—and who by now constituted a majority of the country, finally came into their own. Israel's Guardians had regarded these Orientals as singularly poor "human material," and had consigned them indefinitely to the Producer class. As late as the mid-sixties, Ben-Gurion could say: "Those from Morocco had no education. They love their wives, but they beat them. . . . Maybe in the third generation something will appear from the Oriental Jew that is a little different. But I don't see it yet."

As Conor Cruise O'Brien has remarked, "Language of this kind, coming from politicians in a working democracy, and reflecting adversely on huge blocs of voters—soon to be a majority in the State—must be highly unusual, and is probably unique." The reason Labor politicians got away with it is that the Orientals, like everyone else in Israel, believed in the Myth of the Real Israeli. By 1977, however, no one believed in this myth any longer. And so the Orientals went ahead and elected Menachem Begin, "the Black Pope of Zionism," prime minister of Israel.

From the Labor party's perspective, Begin's popularity with the Orientals only showed how easily a Polish "primitive" can appeal to Oriental "primitives." Chafets, however, offers a better explanation of the Begin phenomenon. He points out that for all the "asperities and peculiarities" of his character, Menachem Begin liked, and even loved, his fellow-Jews. Throughout his long political career, Begin never referred to himself as an Israeli:

> He was always "a Jew" or, later, "an old Jew"—and this, more than anything else, endeared him to the Sephardi masses. He didn't see them as incomplete, inadequate or primitive. He didn't want to alienate their children, mock their traditions, scoff at their religious beliefs. He didn't attempt to change their style of dress, their diet, their music. He couldn't have cared less if they kept their original diaspora names (as he kept his). . . . In his view, Jews—Sephardi or Ashkenazi—didn't need any radical alterations beyond the natural changes that independence conferred. He certainly never accepted the notion of the New Jewish Man and Woman whom the socialists dreamed of creating in the Zionist laboratory. His mentor, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, had preached a kind of "Jewish Is Beautiful" philosophy. There was nothing wrong with the Jews that sovereignty wouldn't cure; and the first task of achieving it was to develop self-respect—not for what you might become, but for what you already are.

It would have been asking far too much of human nature to have expected Labor's leaders to yield power gracefully to Begin's Likud, and in fact they did not. On the contrary, says Chafets, "Everything worth controlling was in the hands of the Labor establishment, which greeted the victory of Begin's coalition with all the enthusiasm of Bostonian Whigs at Andy Jackson's inauguration ball." Chafets's analogy between Begin and Jackson is a good one, and might be extended further. For just as the election of 1828—in which Jackson and his Western supporters defeated John Quincy Adams and the New England establishment in a campaign of unprecedented viciousness—is commonly regarded as a turning point in the political history of the United States, so too the Israeli elections of 1977 and 1981—in which Likud beat Labor in campaigns that were unusually vitriolic even by Israeli standards—marked the emergence of the Oriental Jews into Israel's political mainstream.

For some Labor supporters, the political history of Israel since 1977 has been one long nightmare. Chafets succeeds in conveying the anguish of these people, one of whom said:

> I am a sabra, the daughter of sabra parents. My grandparents came to the land of Israel as pioneers, to build a just, beautiful place. My family fought for the country, sacrificed for it. And now the people who vote for the Likud, the kind of people who want Begin, have ruined my country. They are brutal, vulgar people, people who have introduced violence and intolerance. I hate their values, their attitudes. They have destroyed our dream. They've stolen my homeland. I feel like a stranger in my own country.

But however much (or little) one might sympathize with these Laborites, one can't help noticing a disturbing analogy between their anguish and the alienation of Henry Adams (great-grandson of John, grandson of John Quincy), who also felt like a stranger in his own country during America's Gilded Age. Adams eventually consoled himself by adopting a sour and bigoted attitude toward his country and all its works. For the sake of Israel, one hopes that the Laborites won't repeat Adams's mistake. ☐

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ANSEL ADAMS: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Ansel Adams, with Mary Street Alinder/Little, Brown/$50.00

Vernon Young

We have become so accustomed to the character of a man's art being contradicted by his personal character, or at least existing in an oblique relationship to it, that we tend to read biographical literature in order to confirm our ready inferences. When no such contradiction is forthcoming, we are amazed. Ansel Adams, master photographer and conservationist, as revealed in the autobiography he completed a year before his death in 1984, is a source of such amazement. He lived a success story from his youth onward. After an initial procrastination in his choice of livelihood (oddly enough the choice was between *music* and photography; seldom is an *augenmensch* also a *hörenmensch*!), he pursued that livelihood with otherworldly dedication and increasing recognition and reward. His private life was without tragedy, frustration, or bitterness. He fell in love with the right girl at the right time, remained happily married for over fifty years, and until the end of his span enjoyed in the main good health.

Adams discovered "the impact of the Natural Scene" in early trips to the Yosemite and was thenceforth committed to the Western American setting as the great good place and as the principal subject of the magnificent photographic record he would eventually compile. The present volume is abundantly illustrated with pictures taken as early as 1930 and as late as 1983. What is perhaps most impressive about them, within the cohesive subject of wilderness, is their variety, their seemingly infinite balancing of the lyric and the majestic, the analytical and the visionary. The style of any single picture has been determined by the view he had chosen. There is not an overall mannerism that makes any two photographs resemble one another—except, naturally, as one mountain will resemble another. Shown these pictures without identification of their authors, you might find it difficult to believe that the sculptured lucidity of "Moon and Half Dome" (1960) was photographed by the same eye that perceived the remarkable interplay of textures in the "Oyster Fence" photo of 1953, or the brooding epic vistas of "Mount McKinley and Wonder Lake" (1947).

Adams may be exaggerating a little when he claims to have decided on a career in photography rather than music as late as 1930, when he first saw the "glorious negatives" of the photographer Paul Strand in New Mexico. His understanding of photography must have already been considerably crystallized in 1926 when his pictures attracted the special attention of Albert Bender. Influential, wealthy, eccentric, and immensely generous, Bender became one of the most fateful patrons in Adams's career. He introduced the photographer not only to Carmel and Robinson Jeffers but also to Mabel Dodge Lujan and Taos. When Adams met Strand in 1930, as he says, he had surely by then fully prepared his *Taos Pueblo* volume. Adams had his first one-man show in New York City in 1933, when photography, either as a fine art or as current history in the work of photo-journalists, was just coming into its own. Howard Devrees, of the *Times*, expressed in a short favorable paragraph the appeal of Adams's art, soon to be shared by thousands. Adams's photography, wrote Devrees, "strikingly captures a world of poetic form. His lens has caught snow-laden branches in their delicate tracery; shells embedded in sandstone; great trees and cumulus clouds. It is masterly stuff."

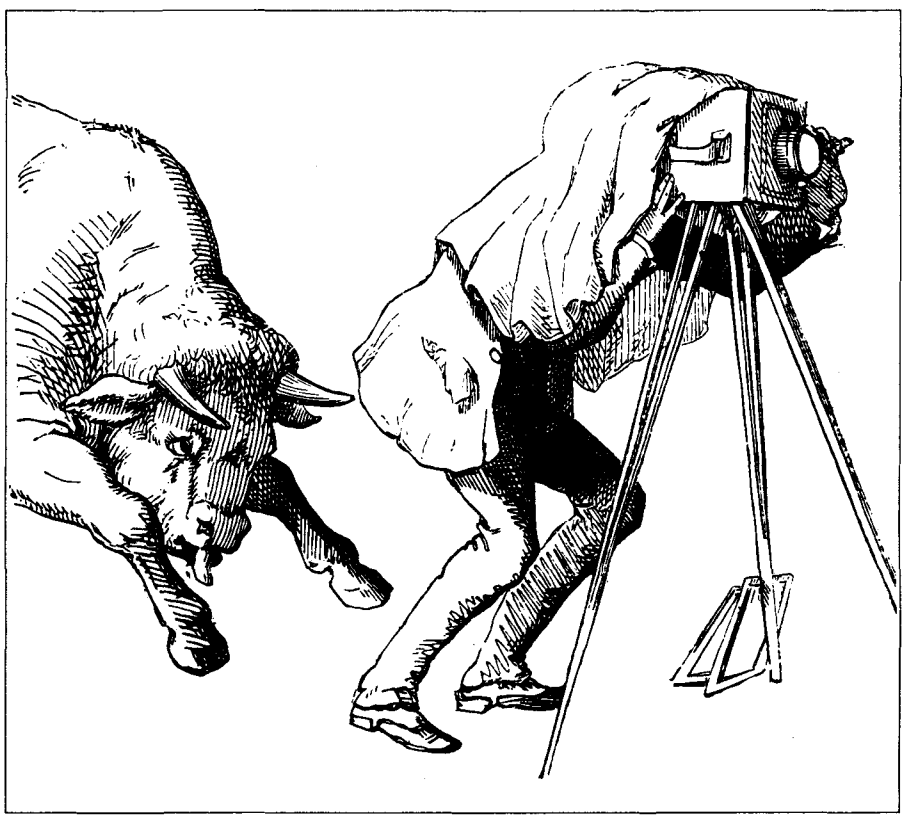
Adams was always wary, in his several statements of credo, about committing himself either to the force of inspiration or to the exclusive demands of method. In a textbook he once wrote he came closest to explaining the delicate balance. "Photographic images cannot avoid being accurate optically, as lenses are used. However, they depart from reality in direct relation to the placement of the camera before the subject, the lens chosen, the film and filters, the exposure indicated, the associated development and printing." For such explanations, other photographers frequently thought of him as primarily a technician. Brett Weston, son of Edward and himself a productive photographer, lived in an intuitive world, distrusting technique and preaching "the triumph of instinct." "I am a primitive," he declared. "Ansel is a scientist." To which Adams protested that he used techniques in order to *free* his vision: "The physics of the situation are fearfully complex but the miracle of the image is a triumph of the imagination."

Inevitably, it seems now, Adams's preoccupation with nature in the wild led to his active cooperation with conservationists who, despite the establishment long ago of National Parks, have had to fight tooth-and-nail against encroachments on virgin land by corporate investors. "The miracle of the image" in his photographs, combined with his championing of projects on behalf of endangered areas (such as Big Sur), has increasingly secured his dual prestige as an artist and as an activist. Yet he has kept the pictures separate from the function they have helped to activate. "People are surprised when I say that I never intentionally made a creative photograph related directly to an environmental issue. I cannot summon the creative impulse on demand. I never know in advance precisely what I will photograph. I go out into the world and hope I will come across something that imperatively interests me. I am addicted to the found object."

From the seventies on, the attention paid him, the exhibits provided and the awards bestowed, mushroomed at what was no doubt a gratifying pace. Europe was discovering him; he was given showings at Arles in 1974 and in 1976, and in London the Victoria and Albert Museum mounted (1976) what he has described as "one of the best installations of my work I have seen." A traveling exhibit was initiated by MOMA (1979) which coincided with the publication of his book, *Yosemite and the Range of Light*. (By 1982 this collection had sold, in hard and soft-cover combined, 200,000 copies!) and in 1981 he was awarded the Hasselblad Gold Medal. To the chagrin of professional portrait photographers, we suppose, Adams was chosen in 1979 to take the official portraits of President Carter and Vice President Mondale (wildlife on the Potomac?); the following year Carter presented him with the country's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom.

Adams's encounters with Presidents predates (and postdates) the meeting with Carter and he gives his frank opinions of these men, insofar as they were concerned with the issue of conservation. He has high praise for Lyndon Johnson, for Gerald Ford, and of course for Carter, none for Nixon, and none for the present incumbent. Invited to the White House, presumably to exchange ideas on the state of public lands, he was "negatively impressed" by the President's failure to discuss or challenge his opinions. He tried to remind Mr. Reagan that the burning of fossil fuels pollutes water and air, reducing the ozone layer of the atmosphere and bringing acid rain. Reagan's "curt reply was that there is considerable disagreement about the causes of acid rain." Yes, well—we've been *there* before, haven't we?

My sole adverse criticism of this volume: the many stunning photographs (largely chosen by Mary Street Alinder) created for the publishers a problem of format they ill resolved. The book is unfittable to any shelf and it weighs a ton! □



Vernon Young is a writer living in Philadelphia.

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SOUND-SHADOWS OF THE NEW WORLD

Ved Mehta/W. W. Norton/$17.95

Jacob Weisberg

Ved Mehta thinks he has led a pretty interesting life. So fascinating has it been, in fact, that Mehta, who is now 52, has dedicated the years remaining him to exhuming his past and describing it in excruciating, microscopic detail. *Sound-Shadows of the New World*, which was previously published in the *New Yorker*, is his sixth volume of autobiography to date, but it only manages to bring us up to Mehta's somewhat tardy puberty at age 18. At this rate of reminiscence, there isn't much danger that art will overtake life. But we can probably look forward to at least a few books from Ved about his years writing about himself.

In this latest work, Mehta tells of his arrival in the United States and the three years he spent as a student at the Arkansas School for the Blind, a state institution which was the only American academy that would admit him. The odds against young Ved in this strange new land are overwhelming: he arrives in New York so green that he doesn't know how to eat with a fork, and is shocked by the notion of couples kissing in public. When he finally reaches Little Rock, he has to ask the rubes what words like "divorce" mean. "I don't think we have it in India," he says.

But because he is so diligent and so eager to become an American, parochial Arkansas rewards Ved with its attention and esteem. Mehta remembers that some of his blind classmates were bigots and even thought that he was black, despite the fact that the school was segregated and didn't admit Negroes. But he doesn't presume to pass judgment on the racism of his teachers and classmates; Mehta's attitude in retrospect seems to be that the people who readily accepted him couldn't have been all that bad. Is a society of blind people less prone to bigotry because of the way it has been stigmatized and patronized by the rest of the world? It's a fascinating question. But Mehta hardly seems to have considered it.

What he offers instead is a story of conformity and instantaneous assimilation. Presented with a dinner of spaghetti and meatballs upon arrival in New York, he shudders briefly at violating the Hindu taboo against eating beef. "The mere thought of it was revolting," he writes. But he quickly remembers the when-in-Rome adage, and digs in. Mehta quotes endless passages from the mundane diary he kept at the time, telling of similar qualms about casual dating, which the Arkansas school encouraged to help its blind students prepare for finding sighted spouses. Although the American custom is foreign to him, he doesn't question its obvious superiority. Instead of depicting a clash between Eastern and Western values, Mehta writes about putting his antiquated beliefs aside.

Listen to him as he parrots the answers to an American History exam in a braille correspondence course he took one summer to graduate early: "Democracy is a marvelous thing. I cannot imagine what our modern democracy would be like without our newspapers. . . .[America's] mineral wealth, its forest wealth, its invigorating climate are unprecedented. Its people have descended from the most energetic European stock. All of these factors have made America prosperous and a model for other countries. . . ." It's great that Ved was such an impressionable young man. But if he has since developed any insights into this proclivity for patriotic platitude, Mehta doesn't share them with us.

Only at the attempt by his piano teacher, Miss Holt, to save his soul does Ved draw the line. He stalls by telling her that although he's not a practicing Hindu, he can't accept the idea that the rest of his family is destined for hell because they don't worship Jesus. He denies that Jesus was the son of God. "Then *go* and burn in Hell," Miss Holt hollers. "I don't mind being damned," Mehta barks back (partly in the hope of being excused from church services). Here, as in all of the arguments in the book, Ved has the last word. Much of it seems to be nothing more than a belated response to teachers who gave him B's and C's. Miss Holt tells her students that only God deserves the grade of A+. Mehta objects that God isn't a student at the Arkansas School for the Blind. If he were, I suppose, His name would be Ved.

Mehta's self-righteousness reaches its height as graduation approaches, when both Harvard and Columbia reject him because of his low SAT scores. He says that the Educational Testing Service ruined his chances by supplying a culturally biased test that wasn't in braille despite the service's promise to provide one. No doubt he did get a raw deal from ETS. But the point Mehta makes isn't about cultural bias, or even discrimination against the handicapped. It's that *he* succeeded despite the obstacles placed in his way, and despite the enormous odds against him. He trumpets his own achievements and then steps back, as if waiting for our applause.

The subtitle of *Sound-Shadows of the New World* ought to be "Blind Ambition." Normans Mailer and Podhoretz have written directly about the topic, but because of their respective humor and honesty their descriptions of lusting after success were excusable. Mehta, however, seems to think that his handicap excuses his writing an entire book about self-absorption. His writing is so humorless and superficial that he manages to transform the topic of ambition into something more tedious than hideous:

> Then there is writing. I love to read and write. I love good literature. I love to criticize books. I have the imagination and possess the talent to write, I think. I would also like my views to be known widely—all over the world. I think I could succeed in this profession, in spite of the great competition. . . .

As a matter of fact, he writes about his ambitions in pretty much the same way he writes about the weather:

> For the last couple of weeks it has been awfully springlike. I have been as much time as I possibly can outside, admiring and enjoying the flowers. They've already started blossoming. But Arkansas has really startling reverses in weather, and everyone is predicting a bitter cold wave. That'll put an end to the flowers.

Stop this autobiography, I want to get off.

Mehta's next volume is expected to treat his years at Pomona College, in Pomona, California, where the weather is also supposed to be lovely. One can only hope someone will knock some sense into him and persuade him to abandon what is surely one of the most overblown literary endeavors of all time. Early in his book Mehta bemoans the fact that, until quite recently, the only careers for blind people in Arkansas were piano tuning and broom making. That was desperately unfair. But is it a measure of their progress that the blind now have equal opportunity to write for the *New Yorker* and bore innocent people to death? □

Jacob Weisberg, a reporter/researcher at the New Republic, *doesn't read braille but he speaks it.*

BETHELL

(continued from page 13)

housing?

They had poor housing in San Francisco, too.

"Lady, they strip-searched you for bringing in a computer. Doesn't that tell you something?"

He was "brainwashed by anti-Soviet propaganda," she said.

He said she was "the victim of a self-induced blindness."

"And with that," Larry recalled, "we reached a stony impasse."

Driving away from the Moscow Airport, our Intourist guide Olga (who was with us for the entire trip) allowed two more guides onto the bus for the ride into Moscow. One young woman sat next to Beichman. She might quite reasonably have assumed that we were one more peace group.

"Why can't we live in peace?" she pertly asked him.

"Because the Red Army is in places where it isn't wanted."

"Like where?"

"Hungary."

We drove through muddy miles of socialist realism—dreary blocks of flats, Lenin in repose, Lenin making a point to the masses, Lenin in profile, Lenin Triumphant. Buses packed with strap-hanging proles made their way out to communal apartments. Everything was dirty, dun-colored, unpainted, grimy, poor, crumbling, trodden down. Old ladies with black shawls and shopping bags plodded along minding their own business. Long live the Communist Party of the Soviet Union! Not a leaf in sight.

Quite abruptly we were in the center, with silvery church domes and freshly gilded onions glinting through bare birch branches. The Kremlin! A high wall and a Red Star, a river embankment and here was our hotel, the Rossiya, only two or three hundred yards from St. Basil's Cathedral. It looked, as Christopher Booker has written, "like nothing so much as a cluster of tethered Montgolfier hot-air balloons." It was smaller than I had imagined, just as the Kremlin itself was somehow more impressive.

At supper live music was provided by a hefty, pink-gowned quartet—the Kremlinettes, as I thought of them—playing Moscow rock-cum-pasodoble. They seemed to displease Olga—

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perhaps she thought them *niekulturnye. Washington Times* foreign editor Holger Jensen, our Camel-smoking Marlboro Man, gallantly danced with a Russian woman who identified herself as a "commandante from the Urals." (Holger speaks Russian.)

"Commandante of what?" he asked.

"We have those."

She told him she was in Moscow for some award.

"Are you glad to be in Moscow?" he asked.

"Of course. Lenin is here."

The food was not nearly so plentiful as in Tbilisi. In Moscow a second cup of coffee cost you kopecks out of your own pocket. But there was always plenty of bread, and (wherever we went) butter. The latter is furnished at highly subsidized prices by the European Common Market—mostly West Germany. (The Common Market should be thought of as a system whereby West European taxpayers subsidize both their own farmers and Soviet consumers. "The latest butter shipment to Russia will cost the Community budget $200 million," according to the May 17 *Economist*.)

Lenin's tomb was not on our tour. Were it not for the two-hour wait in line I would have gladly viewed the mummified founder, although I gather there is some doubt as to whether it really is Lenin's corpse. Larry Moffitt said that on an earlier visit he viewed the remains, "to make sure he hasn't risen."

After supper Arnold Beichman and I went out into Red Square. It was cold and the hour late but still there was a crowd waiting for the goose-stepping guards who change on the hour outside the portal to Lenin's Mausoleum. Deathwatch duty at the heart of the Evil Empire! People in the crowd spoke to one another, if they spoke at all, in hushed voices, as one might in church.

The next day we were granted an audience with the U.S. Ambassador, Arthur Hartman, at the spacious residence, Spaso House. First we were served sandwiches and coffee—by Russian maids. Did I not spot the lynx-eyed commandante from the Urals out of the corner of my eye, slipping quietly into a distant pantry? Here was penetration! But fear not, Readers, the Foreign Service knows what it is doing. Somewhere upstairs a piano was being tuned, for Maestro Horowitz.

His Excellency appeared and spoke to us for twenty minutes or more about the state of U.S.-Soviet relations, etcetera, but afterward we were unexpectly told that his remarks were "off the record," so I cannot divulge his insights, however perspicacious, and even if the maids *were* listening in. At one point Hartman's wife came by, needed the car because (gawd what a bore) she was going off to lunch with the Bulgarians.

Natasha, our attractive Intourist guide (as you see we had "local" guides, but they were always subordinate to Olga, our commandante from Leningrad), took us on a bus tour of Moscow, somewhat spoiled by the overcast, drizzly weather. Like Lali, Natasha knew a lot about the history of art. With politics off limits, I suspect most non-Party members stop thinking about political affairs and so have a lot of time left over for browsing through art history books and dreaming about the past. (People who believe in Communism dream about the future; those who experience it dream about the past.)

Even in steady rain on Saturday, the streets were packed with people. Better than being cooped up in a shared apartment, after all. Dixy Lee Ray commented on the absence of bicycles, as earlier she had noted the absence of any sign of animal transportation in the countryside (i.e., Georgia).

We drove by the huge Moskva Swimming Pool, site of the Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer, which was demolished by Stalin in 1934. The plan was to put in its place a giant Palace of Soviets, topped by a statue of Lenin twice the height of the Statue of Liberty. But the foundations would not hold; hence the swimming pool. Today, someone said, when the mists rise up from the water's surface, bathers are secretly baptized.

Natasha told us there were forty functioning churches in Moscow, one of which I visited, the Russian Orthodox Yelokhovsky Cathedral. Scaffolding around the dome indicated state maintenance. The interior was beautifully kept up. For the 6 p.m. service there were at least 500 people in the church, mostly it is true old ladies or "babushkas" in shawls; hundreds of them, none more than five feet tall, were shuffling about, lighting candles, kissing icons, and crossing themselves every few minutes. The service lasted two and a half hours with no congregational singing or participation to speak of. Black-hatted metropolitans ruled the roost as firmly as the Communists do the citizenry.

Occasionally one or another berobed clergyman disappeared behind the lateral screen and chanted out from some hidden recess. There was a first-rate choir and a half-hour sermon. there *were* younger people, some conspicuously well dressed, who came and went according to their own schedule. At one point a couple brought a baby to be baptized, or do I mean something else? (They put a spoonful of something into the infant's mouth.) A bit later, a vigilant babushka reprimanded me in sign language for standing with my hands behind my back. (There are no chairs or pews in Russian Orthodox churches.) Curiously, the service seemed to have no well-defined conclusion. It just petered out. While others were still officiating, a clergyman came out from behind a side screen and the crowds kissed his hand (no ring). I was reminded of Churchill's observation that Russians are either at your feet or at your throat.

The Kremlin! What a fantastic sight it is. Nothing had prepared me for it. We had a panoramic view of it from our hotel. Buildings of the Soviet state stand shoulder to shoulder with gold- and silver-domed cathedrals, all meticulously preserved and maintained: the Cathedral of the Assumption; the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; the Cathedral of the Archangel; the Palace of Congresses; the Cathedral of the Annunciation; the Senate of the Soviets; the Savior Tower; the Statue of Lenin.

Here was the greatest internal contradiction, the ultimate dialectic: Dialectical spiritualism! There has to be some undisclosed meaning to Communism. It is entirely inadequate to think of it as a misguided method of economic production. It is surely something more than that, and something more sinister. I walked the mile and a half around the Kremlin wall one afternoon. Strange thoughts come to you. Perhaps it helps for a while not to be distracted by our own endless media barrage of half truth. Keeping me company was the endlessly patient crowd of Russians trudging along, lost in their own thoughts. There's no penalty for thinking, and Vladimir Bukovsky for one has said that among people who trust one another the conversation in Moscow is the world's best.

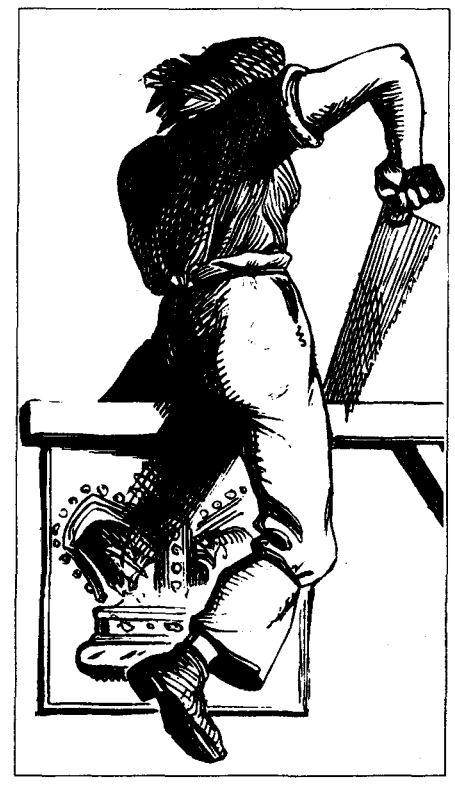
In the pre-revolutionary phase of Russian foreboding about what was to come, Dostoevsky among others saw a connection between the decline of Christianity and the rise of "future socialism," which was destined to arise "in lieu of the deteriorated Christian principle." At the same time he believed that "God-bearing" Russians were destined to "regenerate and save mankind in the name of a new God."

The thought arose, as one walked along with these poor Russians: Could it be that they, having for seventy years experienced the ordeal of Communism, have by their suffering helped to "regenerate" mankind? Was this indeed the meaning of the fifteenth-century prediction, made after the fall of Constantinople, that Moscow would be the "third Rome"?

More recently the Russian writer Nikolai Berdyaev has made the point that Communism is a form of chastisement. "Christian justice has not worked itself out fully in life," he wrote in 1931, "and in virtue of the mysterious ways of Divine Providence the forces of evil have undertaken the task of realizing social justice." For this reason Communism "should have a very special significance for Christians, for it is a reminder and a denouncement of an unfulfilled duty."

My conviction under the Kremlin wall was that Communism was destined to spread further and would engulf more nations. Certainly in the U.S. today we have no principle of resistance to it. Communism cannot be stopped by tax cuts, as the supply siders believe, nor can it be stopped by negotiated settlements, as the liberals hope. If Berdyaev is right, not to mention Whittaker Chambers and others, Communism is an evil religion, the "reciprocal" of Christianity, and it can be resisted only by a restoration of Christian principles to public life in the West.

My second Kremlin conviction, shared by other visitors to the Soviet Union, notably Malcolm Muggeridge, was that Christianity will one day be officially restored in Russia. Russia will be converted, as the visionaries at Fatima, Portugal, reported in 1917. It is not at all a modern thought, that the Russian Orthodox churches now being restored (ostensibly to give the tourists something to see) are subconsciously being readied for a return to their original use. Nor is it necessarily for us an encouraging thought, because so dramatic an event is only likely to occur at a moment of dire national emergency—for example when the Western countries that have all along been subsidizing Soviet Communism are no longer able to do so. □



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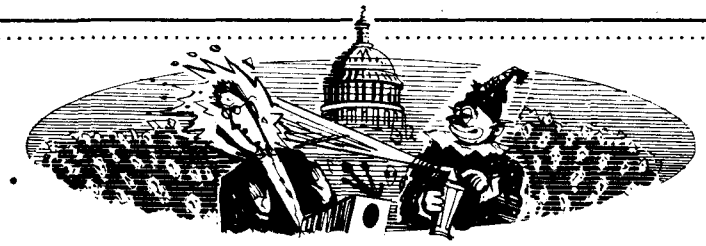

"The hand is unique to human beings," read one of Citibank's advertisements for Hands Across America. "It's what makes us different from every other species." So too, say some paleontologists, does the ability to blush in embarrassment. And if there was ever a reason for a nation to rise up and blush as one, Hands Across America was surely it. But as I wandered the Washington Mall during HAA, wading through that now-famous river of goose-bumpy skin and flared nostrils, I saw not a hint of embarrassment. Thus falls yet another barrier setting man apart from beast.

• • •

Since the city was packed cheek to jowl with "press staging areas" for the event, I had trouble picking the most profitable vantage point. I considered the White House: a couple of days before, President Reagan had announced that he would forgo another snoozy weekend under the pines of Camp David and join Hands as the Line snaked up the White House driveway. It's long been obvious that the dignity Reagan brings to the presidency comes not from his principles, which are vague and indistinct, but from his natural disposition. I'm seldom surprised when he stumbles. But the thought of watching the leader of the free world hold hands with his ridiculous daughter and a few kids with security clearance as they all struggled with the day's tuneless theme song—"This sky so serene has felt the kiss of countless dreams/ And this earth that smells so sweet cradles us all in its great heartbeat"—was too much even for me. I decided to avoid the White House like an AIDS clinic. Instead, I made for the Press Command Center below the Washington Monument, where I could get out of the sun and grab some lunch.

• • •

Huddled around the entrance to the press tent was a small contingent of schoolgirls who had heard that Sugar Ray Leonard was going to show up. "Well, is he in there or not?" one of the girls demanded. Denying everything, I ducked into the tent and spied the groaning board, stacked with buckets of Roy Rogers fried chicken, tubs of cole slaw, and two large bowls of the ubiquitous pasta salad. Several of my colleagues bent over the table, skeptically examining the fare. To the side was a cooler overflowing with Cokes—Diet, caffeine-free, Classic, the works. Along with Citibank, Coca-Cola was the corporate sponsor of HAA (on the stage behind us, a rock band churned out a song with the chorus: "Coke Classic, for the red, white and you, mm-mm-mm"). I set my plate down at a phone bank and was soon joined by "Entertainment Tonight's" Washington correspondent, whom I often run into at frivolous events that take place within sniffing distance of movie stars. Looking distraught, he made an urgent call to L.A. "Look, I got kind of a problem," he said into the phone. "You want forty-five seconds with a stand-up close, right? But the thing is, there aren't that many stars here, per se. I got Chuck Norris, Sugar Ray Leonard, maybe Coretta King. And Mary Lou Retton I can probably get, but she's . . . I agree, I agree. So what do you want me to do?" As he listened his face got longer. Finally he said, "Well, thanks anyway. I'll see what I can come up with." He hung up the phone and looked out hopelessly at the anonymous crowd gathering around the base of the monument.

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One of the HAA staffers had explained the mechanics of the Line to me this way: "People will start holding hands in clumps, see. We will have mile captains and half-mile captains along the way, and they will bring the different clumps together so there is one continuous Line. Then we will have other volunteers walking up and down the Line to make sure everyone knows what songs to sing: first, 'We Are the World,' then, 'Hands Across America,' and then, 'America the Beautiful.' At that point in time, about 3 o'clock, the human Line will achieve reality." It didn't work quite that smoothly, of course. I walked down to the west end of the Capitol, where a high-strung, wiry teenager named Jesse stood among a throng of Linees. As a half-mile captain, he was having trouble. "Please, people," he said in a high voice quickly going hoarse. "Listen to me! We need you on the other side of this pool." He made pushing motions with his skinny arms. "Right over there. Please. Now!" The hand-holders stared at him. "Oh god," he said. "Don't you see this is my job? What time is it?" He grabbed someone's wrist and looked at her watch. "It's 2:30! God almighty, we gotta go, we gotta go!" With that he lit out toward the other side of the pool in great leaps and bounds. Occasionally he would turn to wave his arms again, but the hand-holders stayed where they were, looking lost.

• • •

At a more leisurely pace I went back up the Mall in the same general direction as Jesse, toward the Washington Monument. In my long pants and sunglasses, with a press pass dangling over my tie and a stack of HAA literature under my arm, I was frequently mistaken for an HAA staffer. "You look official," barked a middle-aged man, grabbing my shoulder. He was agitated; his belly shook slightly as it drooped over his jeans, and on his T-shirt was pinned an enormous "U.S. Out of Nicaragua" button. "Where's Reagan supposed to be?" he demanded. "In the White House driveway," I said, "but I don't think you can get in there." "That figures," he said. "I don't know what the hell you let him in line for anyway. If it weren't for him, none of us would have to be here today." His wife waved their tickets, which indicated in computer codes their assigned location in the Line. "Tell us where we're supposed to go," she said. I took the tickets, examined them carefully—they could have been written in braille for all I knew—and handed them back to her. "Behind the Archives," I said. "About three blocks that way. That's a good place to be, because they need people over there. But hustle." After they hurried off, I took out my HAA map to double-check that the Line would pass several blocks away from the rear of the Archives.

• • •

When HAA achieved reality, I was almost to the Washington Monument. The Line was, as one girl complained to me, all clunched together—three or four people deep in some sections—but it was real. The television pictures of the swaying bodies in white T-shirts, the bobbing heads in white eyeshades, the clenched hands held aloft, the singing of the abysmal songs—these are now preserved for the ages. But they can never carry over the effect of staring straight into the thing, eyeball to eyeball. I weaved in and out of the Line. A mass delirium had seized the nation, and to witness the madness at close range was deeply unsettling—as if a trusted friend suddenly got a wild light in his eye and confessed to being Catherine the Great. It unsettled me, anyway: first the dizzy disbelief, and then, as the Line broke up and the hand-holders parted in hugs and cheers and made their way to their cars and buses, the hollow melancholia. I stopped off in the press tent, to jot down the standard quotes from the spokesman: just the beginning . . . dawn of a brighter day . . . a new consciousness for all of us. I had the uneasy feeling that he was right, but I was done with interviews. I decided to head for a local watering hole up on Connecticut Avenue, as my spirits spiraled down and down. In the face of pop psychosis on the scale of Hands Across America, only an extraordinary affirmation can haul one up from the dismal funk—something perdurable and ancient, some fundament older than the hand and even the ability to blush. As I passed through a stand of trees near the Ellipse I noticed two girls, minimally encased in lion-skin bikinis, lounging in the shade with a picnic basket between them. I fancied that one was eyeing my notepad and press pass. I drew up my last ounce of spirit and squared my drooping shoulders. Nathan, I told myself, you are still a reporter, by God, and there is a girl over there who deserves to be interviewed. I'd tell you what she said, but it was off the record. —*GJN*

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CURRENT WISDOM

Progressive

The esteemed Bill Lueders composes his singular "Letter to a New Arrival" in *largo doloroso*, insufferable *doloroso*:

Cradling you in the crook of my arm, I am so happy with you I could cry. But then I think of all the other reasons to cry for you—reasons that have nothing to do with happiness. I've even wondered, sometimes, whether it was right to bring you into the world. That's a terrible admission, but it's true.

When you were born, the President of your country was engaged in a propaganda campaign to provide military aid to a group of surly mercenaries, called *contras*, bent on overthrowing the elected government of another country, Nicaragua. Thousands of Nicaraguans have already been killed for the crime of supporting their own government. Thousands more will die if our President has his way.

One official of our Government even advanced the notion that members of Congress who refuse to support these killers are in league with communism. The President backed him up. Will this tactic work? It always has; the people of this country are conditioned from birth to have an intense fear and loathing of anything labeled "communist." Presidents and other liars merely need to utter the word to get what they want: more money for weapons and military involvements; less money for schools and the needy; tighter controls on what people may see, hear, and read; new assaults on people's privacy. Politicians give in because they tend to be spineless oafs.

Every day they build more bombs. Every day they tell more lies so they can build more bombs still. Every day it becomes more likely that the bombs will be used. Will you even get to live to be as old as I am now, Jesse? Possibly not.

I'm sorry, little one. . . .

[June 1986]

Associated Press

A lone LaRouchie effects the unlikely rebirth of a macho man:

The fist fight in LaGuardia Airport's central terminal broke out Sunday after the man, a supporter of political extremist Lyndon LaRouche, shouted that Donahue and his wife, actress Marlo Thomas, "ought to be murdered," said Port Authority Police Officer Mitchell Kaufman.

Donahue responded, the two began shouting and the fight began, Kaufman said.

The incident occurred as Donahue and Thomas were at the airport to catch a flight to Boston where Thomas received an award Sunday night for her work against nuclear arms.

"I thought about it on the plane. And you know, if we have to have a war, let it be man-to-man and fist-to-fist," Donahue said when he arrived at the dinner. "What this technology does is make it impossible to be brave. If you drop a bomb on my neighborhood, I can't prove that I'm tough."

[May 11, 1986]

Moscow Radio

As valid today in progressive Moscow as on the first day they were uttered—two stupendously reassuring declarations to a grateful Soviet citizenry from the worthy Igor Morokhov, deputy chairman of the atomic energy commission, and from the equally worthy Fedeor Ovchinnikov, deputy minister of power, respectively:

Soviet safety norms and technical regulations simply rule out any accident which may lead to an escape of radioactivity. We have no secrets in this field. I can say that half of the money assigned for building a nuclear power station is spent on a reliable system of radiation protection which is fully automated to make it absolutely trustworthy.

[April 3, 1979]

Scientifically formulated norms and regulations on radiation safety are respected in the USSR when nuclear power stations are being designed, constructed and operated. These norms exclude the possibility of accidents and the emission of radioactive material into the atmosphere.

[April 5, 1979]

Vogue

How aging feminist Germaine Greer became Billy Goat Gruff, or is there a deeper metaphysical point being made here? Let the ages decide:

Aging is like growing. It isn't a gradual, imperceptible process, but happens in leaps and bounds. You can go on for years being the same age. Your face doesn't change much; your weight remains much the same. You never think of yourself as too old to learn the latest craze, can't wait to off with the old and on with the new. Then, crunch.

You're polishing a mirror table and you realize your neck has gone. Just like that. You put aside your polishing cloth and examine the thing that has appeared like a bracket joining your chin to your neck. A wattle, in fact.

You're talking to your sister on the telephone and feeling your chin with your fingertips. Then, you scream. "What's the matter?" asks your sister. "I've *found* something, on my chin." "A bristle, dear," says your sister. "The first of many."

[May 1986]

New Yorker

The ratiocinations of an editorial writer with a terminal case of *New Yorker Kultur:*

Both nonviolent resisters and terrorists address themselves to civilians—whom the former help and the latter kill. But it is for just this reason that a nation can effectively oppose terrorism without necessarily exterminating it. Since the violence of terrorists is ultimately aimed at the mind and spirit of a nation, the nation can thwart them with a mental and spiritual response.

[May 5, 1986]

East Village Eye

Neoteric artsiness occasioned by bombs over Tripoli:

We East Villagers have poured a lot of time and creative energy into the evocation of a "post-apocalyptic" counterculture. We have reveled in "Weimarian" decadence, and romanticized the "post-industrial" moonscape of our ruined tenements and shattered streets. But now the proverbial chickens have come home to roost. Our elaborate charade of "deconstruction" has turned to a nightmare, our ironic catchphrases transmuted from semiotic limbo into the gritty immediacy of yesterday's banner headline. Suddenly and without warning we stand shivering in the icy dawn of a new era, one which Vito Bruno dubbed so prophetically the Year of the Real Deal.

It remains to be seen where all this will end. Each day, we find ourselves walking the same streets we ever did, passing the same buildings and landmarks, sitting in the same restaurants, frequenting the same clubs. Delighting in the breaking weather, we stretch our pallid limbs to the sun, our bodies aching with warmth and sensuality. Each morning we drink deeply of the ocean breeze that wafts its way among the tenements. But already in that air a new flavor is perceptible, intangible as ether, sharp as steel, and pungent as the smoking rafters of Tripoli.

[May 1986]

Village Voice

Still more independent thought from Prof. Pete Hamill, writing in a mental-health newsletter:

For most Americans, comparing Reagan to Qaddafi is a form of blasphemy. And yet for all of Reagan's macho charm, the parallels are unavoidable. And spooky.

For example, it seems certain that Qaddafi has funded terrorism beyond his own borders, perhaps planned it, possibly ordered specific acts, all in the name of a fuzzy-headed political ideology. But so has Reagan. Qaddafi thinks he is right in most matters, expressing in his words and deeds the true feelings of the people he rules; so does Reagan. Qaddafi reduces most political thinking to dumb slogans; Reagan grins and says, "I'm a contra too." . . . It's possible, of course, that . . . he recognizes in Qaddafi some funhouse mirror image of himself—the dark double of Dostoyevski and Kafka and Carlos Fuentes—and hates him for it. For example, Qaddafi is often described, with accuracy, as a religious fanatic, but some people think the same of Reagan—and for good reasons. The American president regularly presents his most batty ideas (the Evil Empire etc.) to groups of American fundamentalist mullahs. He rattles on about "traditional" Christian beliefs, as if they were shared by most of the people of the whole wide world instead of a rather puny fraction. (In Reagan's view, believing that a dead Jewish carpenter is God is somehow intellectually sound, while embracing the Koran is the mark of a zealot.)

[April 29, 1986]

Daily Nebraskan

The lead editorial of a great college daily shows just how conservative the students of this great Republic really are:

It appears that we are dealing with more than one madman.

The U.S. attack on Libya Monday night showed the world the shallow mental depths of one of the world's most powerful men.

Immediately after the attack, President Reagan addressed the people of the United States to rationalize his attack on terrorism. Only terrorist-related targets were destroyed, he said. We don't want to harm any Libyans. The message was clear: We have to stop terrorism, and if it takes a bomb or two, so be it.

"He (Khadafy) counted on America to be passive," Reagan said. "He counted wrong." It was the tone of an irrational man, not a world leader. . . .

There's no doubt that one of the madmen will strike again. As Tripoli recovers from its blasts and Reagan savors victory, other events will transpire. If Reagan provocates the next attack, he needs to be a bit more careful.

[April 16, 1986]

Washington Post

For Miss Mary McGrory, one more fallen Kremlin idol, and "the expectation" had been so rosy!—*whose* expectation, bonehead?:

As of now, we have learned more about Mikhail Gorbachev than about the nuclear accident still unfolding in his country.

The expectation when he took office was that the general secretary was a "new" kind of Soviet leader, an open executive whose paramount interest was making things, that is communism, work. His criticism of drunkenness, sloth and inefficiency held promise of an era of common sense.

But the ghastly events of the past few days show that Gorbachev is as conventional and hidebound as his predecessors.

[May 1, 1986]

Chicago Tribune

A modern love song sung by those who in this day of rude maladies dare not exchange bodily fluids:

Dispatches from some of those folks out there living it . . .

Leslie: "Gregory and I have been together for 18 years because each one of us thinks of the other first and the self second; it is a good equation. We may have disappointed, but we have never betrayed each other. The fires of passion may be burning low and the eyes may rove at times, but each of us knows what we have in the other and will not take any risk that we might lose it. In this sense we are selfish: I want him too much to risk losing him. We enjoy each other's company, are busy in our church, have a nice group of friends like ourselves and will be together as long as we both shall live. I am 61 and he is 59. We cannot be married because we are both men."

[April 23, 1986]

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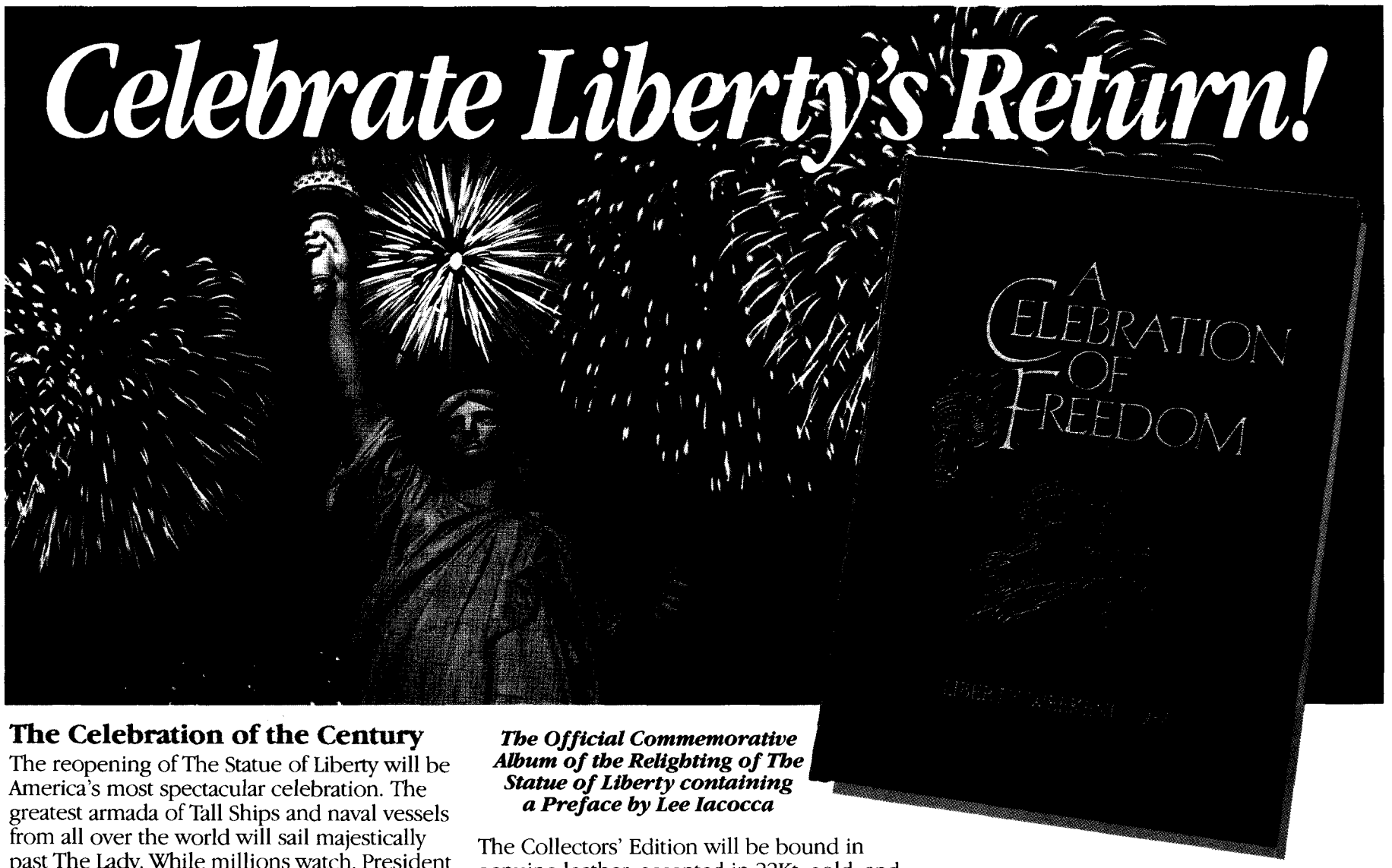

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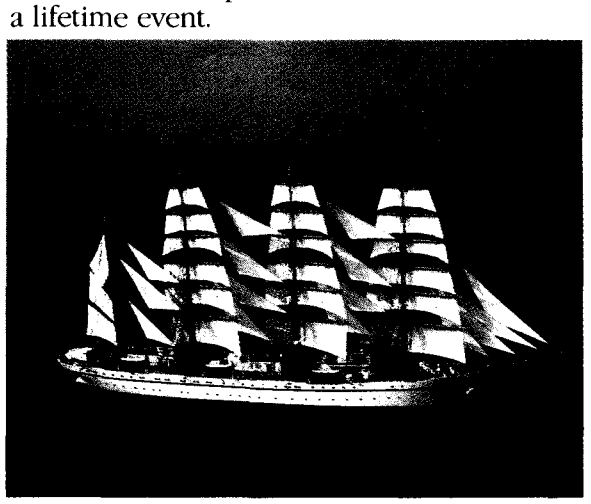

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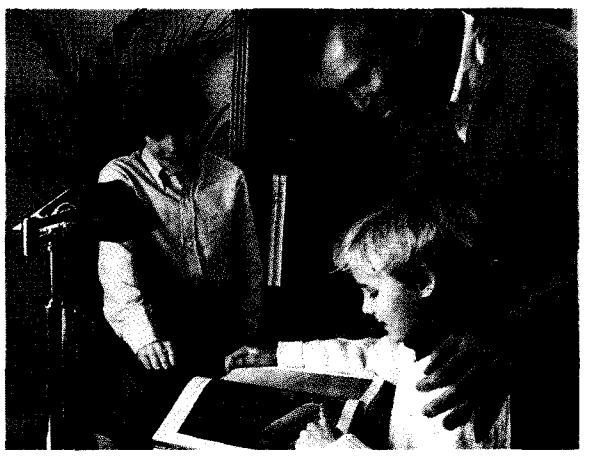

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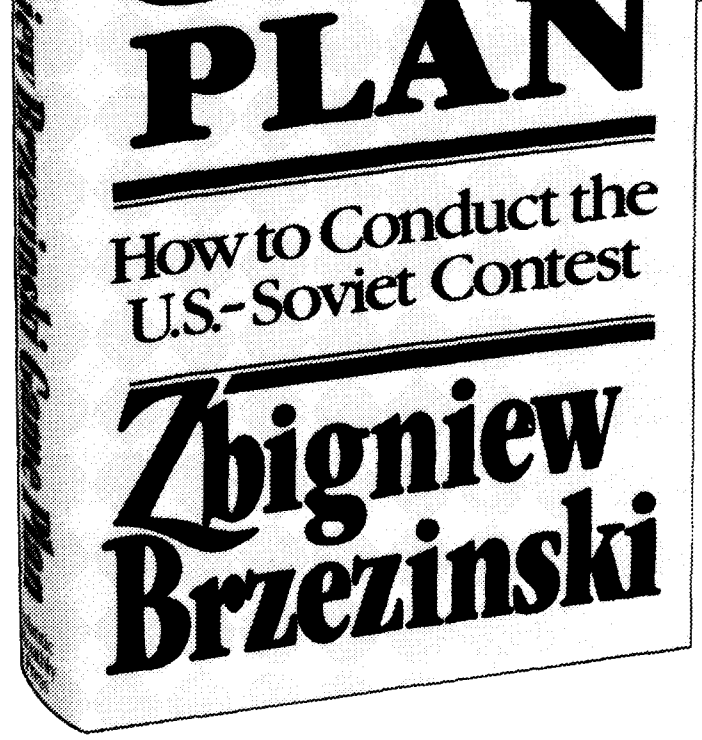

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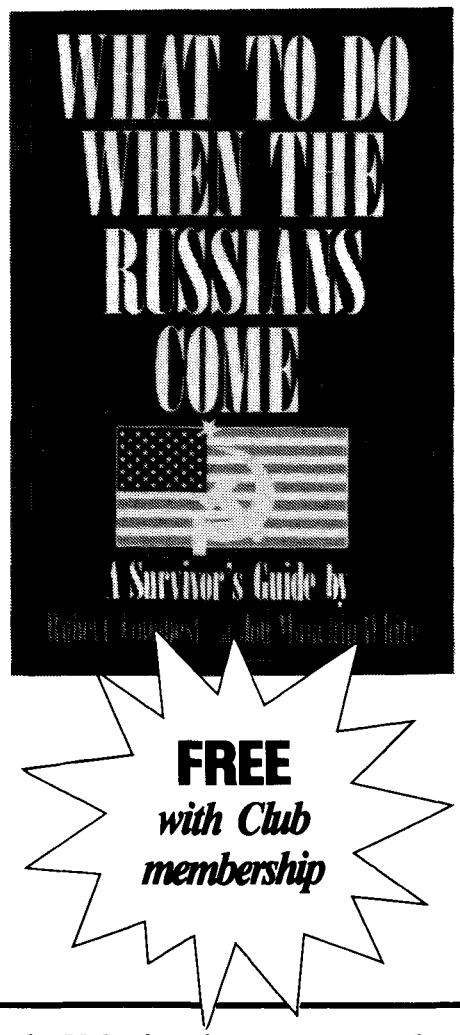

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